THE NATION

APRIL 22, 1978 60 cents

...RARY
...3
J. 07012

SPRING BOOK ISSUE

DRIFTING LEFT: FOUR NEW MAGAZINES
James Boylan

REVIEWING POETRY: WHERE HAVE ALL THE CRITICS GONE?
Robert Bly

LIVING IN THE HOUSE OF FICTION
E. L. Doctorow

Quaint Cuts in the Chapbook Style; Joseph Crawhill (Dover Publications)

and reviews by—

MAX APPLE
PETER BISKIND
ANGUS CAMERON
J. ANTHONY LUKAS
MARK CRISPIN MILLER
EARL ROVIT
NANCY LYNN SCHWARTZ
ANDREW SCULL
CLAN
FRED

...ERICK TURNER
E. ORANGE NJ 07019
UPSALA COLLEGE LIBRARY
1477 A62 ... 1979

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LETTERS

on Navasky on Weinstein

Newtown, Conn.
Congratulations to *The Nation* and Victor Navasky for your beautifully documented analysis of Weinstein's *Perjury* in the April 8th issue. In the end, as you say, Weinstein's efforts may harm no one but himself and his supporters . . . but this will be true only if they continue to be challenged by all who are equipped to do so, and I marvel at the thoroughness of the challenge you have mounted. There are . . . far more instances of faulty scholarship and partisan argument in Weinstein's book than you had room to cover, but the samples you have given abundantly support your conclusion. . . .

My own conclusions about the case were expressed and documented in *Alger Hiss: The True Story*, the book which Weinstein attacked in his *New York Review of Books* article (April 1, 1976) to which you referred. Not being a "nonspecialist" in the case, I have no hesitation in rendering my "verdict" that Hiss was innocent, and I have added further documentation on the subject in an article for the June issue of *Harper's*. . . . *John Chabot Smith*

New York City
Victor Navasky's remarkable piece of investigative reporting in his review of Allen Weinstein's *Perjury* brought to mind my single experience with Weinstein about seven years ago. . . .

The New York Times Book Review on March 7, 1971, published a review of my book, *The Press and the Cold War* (Bobbs-Merrill, 1970). The reviewer was Allen Weinstein. It was an extremely unkind review, but that is not my concern here. Oddly for a historian, Weinstein charged me with continuing "to wage the battles of the past," and offering myself as a "somewhat battered Ishmael, shipwrecked during the McCarthy era's political storms but now returned to tell the tale."

In Weinstein's view, I had presented a "proto-revisionist lowdown on the postwar years that runs something like this: the United States initiated the cold war despite the Soviet Union's conscientious struggle to preserve peace. . . . Alger Hiss fell victim to an FBI frame-up, as did the Rosenbergs and every other defendant in a loyalty-security trial. . . . Aronson, in short, is more Ahab than Ishmael; rather than bearing witness, he comes to render judgment. . . ."

After consulting my Bible and Melville to affirm the gospel of my identity according to Weinstein, I wrote to the *Times Book Review* (the letter was published April 11, 1971) to protest that "even Mr. Weinstein's escape phrase 'something like' does not excuse [his] misrepresentations" of my expressed views. I said:

"I did not discuss the guilt or innocence of Hiss or the Rosenbergs, or the politics of the countless thousands of victims of the loyalty-security hysteria. . . . My point was that the prejudice of the press against Hiss deprived him of a fair trial, and that the hostile coverage of the Rosenbergs's trial and its aftermath helped to doom the campaign for clemency."

Naturally the *Times*, as a newspaper of balance, gave Weinstein equal space to clobber me again. He remained convinced, he wrote in a response in the same issue, that I was "more Ahab than Ishmael. . . . Despite [Aronson's] protest, *The Press and the Cold War* does take sides—and strains to 'document' every view his letter disclaims: namely, that Hiss and the Rosenbergs were innocent. . . ."

I revive this exchange for a specific reason. In a recent interview in the magazine *Politicks* (as reported by William F. Buckley in the *New York Post*, March 28, 1978), Weinstein described a confrontation with Hiss late in 1977 at which Weinstein rendered his judgment upon Hiss: "After some small talk, I blurted out something like [there's that

(Continued on page 453)

Variations CALVIN TRILLIN

I was pleased that Dr. Norman Vincent Peale announced his intention to do a good-news radio program for ITT just as the Korean bribery scandal revealed to me the bright side of the war in Vietnam. It is so rarely that Dr. Peale and I have the opportunity to march in step. Once I got the hang of seeing the bright side, in fact, I was even able to see something bright about Dr. Peale's sponsor. There was, after all, a piece about ITT in *The New York Times* recently that carried the cheery subheadline "U.S. Indicates No Criminal Charges Will Be Brought Against Geneen."

Because we lost the war in Vietnam, the Tongsun Park hearings made me realize, we will not have to spend billions of dollars propping up a government in Saigon that, once having mastered the democratic process, would spend part of those billions bribing our Congressmen to assure the steady flow of more billions. If the Vietnamese want to bribe someone with his own money from now on, they'll just have to bribe the Russians.

In case Norman Vincent Peale requires further evidence of what good news our defeat in Vietnam really was, he need only contemplate the presence in our country of another triple-handled man of God—the Rev. Sun Myung Moon. The Reverend Moon is Korean—just one more result of our shortsightedness in not permitting ourselves to be, as they used to say in the fifties, pushed into the sea at Pusan. We were fortunate in having General Westmoreland and that crowd running our side the next time around. Now that we have been pushed into the air over the American Embassy in Saigon, we need not worry that in ten or fifteen years some Vietnamese industrialist will proclaim himself the Messiah and then snatch Scarsdale clean of cleareyed youths in order to build a New World Order of candy-peddlers and panhandlers.

I was tempted to abandon brightsidedness last week when I came across a remarkably prescient H.L. Mencken quotation that seems to have been making the rounds of Washington egg-head circles lately. In an essay that described Henry Grady's New South as "depressingly similar to the Old Middle-West," Mencken wrote, "On those dark moments when I fear that the Republic has trotted before these weary eyes every carnival act in its repertoire, I cheer myself with the thought that someday we will have a President from the deserts of the Deep South. . . . The President's brother, a prime specimen of *Boobus Collumnus Rubericus*, will . . . gather his loutish companions on the porch of the White House to swill beer from the bottle and snigger over whispered barnyard jokes about the darkies. The President's Cousin, LaVerne, will travel the Halleluyah circuit as one of Mrs. McPherson's soldiers in Christ, praying for the conversion of some Northern Sodom's most Satanic pornographer as she waves his work—well thumbed—for all the yokels to gasp at. . . . The President's daughter will record these events with her box camera. . . . The incumbent himself, cleansed of his bumpkin ways by some of Grady's New South hucksters, will have a charm comparable to that of the leading undertaker of Dothan, Alabama."

(Continued on page 453)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Waiting for Weinstein

When Allen Weinstein told *The Washington Post* that he intended to write a "thorough article" about my criticism of his book on the Hiss case, we sent him a telegram inviting him to publish his rebuttal in *The Nation* at his earliest convenience.

Mr. Weinstein has not yet replied to our invitation, but he did tell a group of historians at City University Graduate Center in New York that he intends to reply in *The New Republic*. A scholar, he reportedly said, is "entitled to choose his forum."

We welcome Mr. Weinstein's reply in the forum of his choice, including the presumably hospitable one of *The New Republic*. And we are especially interested in the substance of his response since, with but a couple of exceptions, he has declined to discuss the points I raised before he presents his formal rebuttal. He told *The Washington Post* that he had tapes and transcripts which would confirm his account. A few days later he announced on the *Today* show that he had tapes "of three of the six witnesses stating exactly what they are quoted as saying in the book," an apparent retreat from his initial protestations. (He did, however, dispute my report concerning two interviewees, both of whom have subsequently provided *The Nation* with additional evidence that Weinstein has distorted what they told him.)

Further, Mr. Weinstein has made the peculiar point (in radio, TV and newspaper interviews) that because I bothered to check out his sources, I was somehow obliged—unlike other reviewers—to get in touch with him. My own view is that such an interview would have been a non sequitur. The 674-page *Perjury* is amply footnoted and if the book's sources can't survive a minimal fact-check no amount of ex parte communications from the author can save it.

Indeed, each day's mail raises new problems with the facts in *Perjury*, and in a future issue of *The Nation*—perhaps after Weinstein has had his counter-say—I intend to explore them. For the present, those still impressed by the credibility of the author's claimed conversion from Hiss-believer to Chambers-accepter are referred to the letter (p. 450) in which James Aronson recalls a 1971 exchange he had with Weinstein in *The New York Times Book Review*, on the evidence of which one finds it increasingly difficult to credit Weinstein's self-description as an early Hiss supporter. If any conversion took place, it seems to have been from scholar to prosecutor.

For thirty years the Hiss case has been invested with a transcendent symbolic importance which would seem to impose on its interpreters a unique obligation to approach it with caution. That many of the early Weinstein celebrants would use his reconviction of Hiss to rationalize dubious political attitudes and activities of the 1950s is important, not merely for historical reasons but also because in the 1950s we may find the roots of the neoconservative politics of the 1970s. In that sense, a book such as *Perjury* (to update Alistair Cooke) puts a *new* generation on trial, those unfamiliar with the facts of the case. Will they be intimidated or challenged by the monumental trappings of Weinstein's "scholarship"?

A peculiar sidelight on the publication of *Perjury* was

IN THIS ISSUE

April 22, 1978

450 Variations — *Calvin Trillin*

EDITORIALS

451 Waiting for Weinstein; Justice, or So It Appears

SPRING BOOK ISSUE

454 Drifting Left: Four New Magazines — *James Boylan*
455 Meeting (poem) — *Ruth Fainlight*
456 Reviewing Poetry: Where Have All the Critics Gone? — *Robert Bly*
459 Living in the House of Fiction — *E.L. Doctorow*
460 The Geese (poem) — *John Engels*

REVIEWS AND THE ARTS

462 Gardner: On Moral Fiction — *Max Apple*
463 Wicker: On Press — *J. Anthony Lukas*
466 Chavkin: The Mind Stealers; Schrag: Mind Control — *Andrew Scull*
469 Mellen: Big Bad Wolves — *Mark Crispin Miller*
473 Robinson: Perdido — *Nancy Lynn Schwartz*
474 Berkhofer: The White Man's Indian — *Frederick Turner*
476 Caute: The Great Fear — *Peter Biskind*
478 Kazin: New York Jew — *Earl Rovit*
480 Cowley: And I Worked at the Writer's Trade — *Clancy Sigal*
480 Bamboo (poem) — *Ellen Bryant Voigt*
482 Commins: What Is an Editor? — *Angus Cameron*
483 Television — *Peter Sourian*
484 Films — *Robert Hatch*
485 Art — *Lawrence Alloway*
485 News from the Low Country (poem) — *Leonard Nathan*

Editor VICTOR NAVASKY — Publisher HAMILTON FISH

Executive Editor ROBERT HATCH — Literary Editor ELIZABETH POCHODA

Contributing Editor BLAIR CLARK

Copy Editor, MARION HESS; Poetry Editor, GRACE SCHULMAN; Theatre, HAROLD CLURMAN; Art, LAWRENCE ALLOWAY; Music, DAVID HAMILTON; Dance, NANCY GOLDNER; Architecture, JANE HOLTZ KAY; Circulation, GLORIA SANGSTER.

Latin America, PENNY LERNOUX; London, RAYMOND WILLIAMS; Paris, CLAUDE BOURDET; Bonn, C. AMERY; Canberra, C. P. FITZGERALD.

The Nation is published weekly (except for first week in January, and bi-weekly in July and August) by Nation Enterprises and copyright 1978 in the U.S.A. by the Nation Associates, Inc., 333 Sixth Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10014. Tel.: 212-242-8400. Second class postage paid at New York, N. Y.

Subscription Price: One year, $21.00; two years, $37.00. Add $1 per year postage for Canada and Mexico; $2 other foreign.

Change of Address: It is essential that subscribers ordering a change of address give four weeks' notice and provide their old as well as their new address. Please give Zip Code numbers for both addresses.

Manuscripts: All work submitted will be read by the editors. The magazine cannot, however, be responsible for the return of unsolicited manuscripts unless they are accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes.

Information to Libraries: The Nation is indexed in Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, Book Review Digest, Book Review Index and the Public Affairs Information Service.

THE NATION

Volume 226
No. 15

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the casual revelation in Herbert Mitgang's *New York Times* story about the book that *Time* had "purchased the rights to obtain an advance copy of the Weinstein book which it summarized last February." What were the terms of the purchase? Did they involve any understanding (explicit or otherwise) as to *Time*'s endorsement of the author's thesis? Why weren't *Time*'s readers told about the singular circumstance of this "scoop," or are we to believe that other *Time* stories have also been the beneficiaries of behind-the-scenes payment to sources and if so, which ones? Is it "checkbook journalism" only when television does it?

It is right to consider such matters in *The Nation*'s Spring Book Issue, which includes important commentary on morality in fiction (see Max Apple's review of John Gardner on p. 462) and journalism (see Anthony Lukas's discussion of Tom Wicker on p. 463). The issue also includes a useful essay by James Boylan, editor of the *Columbia Journalism Review*, on four new magazines of the Left (p. 454). He is sympathetic, but far from overwhelmed by their collective potential for inciting serious social insight, wisdom or change.*

Robert Bly's remarks on the disappearance of the New Criticism remind one of the seminal essay on "The Intentional Fallacy" by Monroe C. Beardsley and W.K. Wimsatt, Jr., which argued that an author is frequently the last person to know the meaning of what he has created. (Weinstein, take note!) Although his lament for criticism as an art is directed at poetry critics, his strictures have special resonance for one trying to make sense out of the internal inconsistencies of even so unpoetic a work of history as *Perjury*.

It would be too easy to make a joke about Weinstein having learned from E.L. Doctorow, the master mingler of myth, history, image and imagination. But Doctorow's musings (p. 459) on "the language of factuality" are directly apropos.

VICTOR NAVASKY

Justice, or So It Appears

At first glance it looks good. A former head of the FBI and two high ex-officials of the bureau have been indicted for a conspiracy to deprive Americans of their civil rights by conducting a series of warrantless breakings and enterings in the search for evidence on radical activity. A federal grand jury has indicted L. Patrick Gray (that interim FBI chief who never became the actual director because he got caught in Watergate dirty work), along with W. Mark Felt, ex-No. 2 man there, and Edward S. Miller, ex-head of the FBI's counterintelligence section. Atty. Gen. Griffin Bell then dismissed the charges against John J. Kearney, a middle-level man in the FBI's New York office, for illegal wiretapping and mail openings.

Justice has triumphed. The small fry are let off the hook and the big fish will be pursued in justice. "I was not able to place the responsibility outside the FBI," says Griffin Bell. So it appears.

The Nation has argued in the past that if the federal government let this whole scandalous matter rest with the prosecution of Kearney alone, it would be an outrageous travesty, not justice at all. So we, among others, might be expected to hail these new indictments as a sign that the government really means to punish those of its law-enforcement officials who themselves so shockingly broke the law.

But is that the proper conclusion? We do not think so. Even before the actual words of these new indictments are known, and much else made public, there are reasons to doubt that justice has yet triumphed or even that it ultimately will do so in the courts. There are too many peculiarities about the way in which this long drawn-out affair developed to the stage of indictment for us to reach an optimistic conclusion.

A few questions must immediately be raised. Why, for instance, do the charges against the three FBI higher-ups run only to the matter of the pursuit of the Weather Underground, accused as collective "mad bombers"? Why not also to the "black bag" jobs on the Socialist Workers Party, a legal political party that suffered ninety-two break-ins? Must we believe that the federal prosecutors have provable evidence only in the Weather cases and not in the cases of the SWP and, for that matter, of the Communist Party? Or are the Weather cases, with their bombing resonances, more frightening to a jury and therefore easier for the defense? Then, too, it seems a little strange that Kearney should be let off—a revearsal, as it were, of the Watergate principle, where the top man went free and the lesser fry to prison.

And what happened between Attorney General Bell and J. Wallace LaPrade, the FBI man who now heads the New York office? It has been reported that LaPrade came close to being prosecuted for perjury after his testimony before a grand jury on these cases and that after conversations with Bell he reappeared before the grand jury and gave different testimony, presumably more truthful. There's an odd odor to that one.

In fact, a peculiar atmosphere hangs over this whole affair. It has the smell of plea-bargaining and, in fact, Mark Felt has told the A.P. that he and his two colleagues of the FBI rejected a proposal from the Justice Department that they plead guilty of a misdemeanor. That was the solution in the Helms case of course and not, from the point of view of equal justice, a satisfactory one.

Like Helms, the former CIA director who lied to the Senate about his doings in Chile, the FBI men either did or did not commit a crime, not a misdemeanor. The courts will return their verdict on that after what one can hope will be a vigorous prosecution and a fair trial. Before we get to that, though, there will be lengthy "discovery" proceedings which could delay, if not abort, the whole court case. It will be harder but not impossible for the FBI men to use these devices as a form of legal blackmail, given that the "national security" claim is more difficult to make about the Weather world than it was about our whole espionage apparatus abroad.

The interim conclusion must be, it seems to us, a very qualified hurrah for these FBI indictments. Along with the rest of the public, we shall be keeping our eye on this important matter of justice/Justice in the months to come.

*As this issue of *The Nation* went to press *Politicks* magazine announced that, if new financing was not found, its next issue would be its last.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

VARIATIONS *(Continued from page 450)*

What bright side can one find in having to spend three more years hearing incessantly about a First Family so predictable that it could be predicted in 1928? There is one: The President virtually never tells any cute stories about Amy. He has either restrained a strong parental instinct for the good of the nation, or Amy is the only 9-year-old alive without a trace of personal charm.

As the father of two charming daughters about Amy's age, I can imagine how difficult such restraint must be—even though I have never bothered to exercise it myself. I simply explain my excesses—my repetitions of Abigail's most telling punch lines, my rendition of Sarah's rendition of "I'm Don José from Far Rockaway"—by posting on the wall of my office a quotation from a President to whose incumbency the Carter administration is often compared, William Henry Harrison. (Oddly enough, Harrison had his own problems with the Middle East. It was his Secretary of State who caused a diplomatic incident by mumbling, as he emerged from a Cairo conference, "If there *were* inferior races, the Arabs would be one of them.") Harrison, so the story goes, replied to his wife's suggestion that he boasted too much about their daughter by saying, "Anyone who is not objectionable about his daughter is a pervert."

Once I had brightsided the Carters, I turned, in an even-handed fashion, to Governor Jerry Brown, of California. Brown is single. No daughters to date movie stars or sons to be photographed with Bianca Jagger. As far as I know, he does not even have any friends. A Brown Presidency, in other words, would be a sort of breathing spell for those of us who have been made by Bert Lance to wonder what we found so repellent about Bebe Rebozo. A savvy brightsider might build Brown's Presidential campaign on just that sort of strength: "Vote for Jerry Brown—No Immediate Family." □

LETTERS *(Continued from page 450)*

escape hatch again], 'When I began working on this book four years ago, I thought I would be able to demonstrate your innocence, but unfortunately I have to tell you I cannot; that my assumption was wrong.' "

Four years ago, for Weinstein, was 1973. Weinstein reviewed my book in 1971. His references to Hiss in that review hardly present him as a man who at that time believed in Hiss's innocence. . . .

James Aronson, Professor of Communications, Hunter College

discipline and integrity

Washington, D.C.

The article of March 18 by Joel Seligman and Paul J. Rosenberg on Jonathan Lubell's exclusion from the *Harvard Law Review* in 1953 . . . was a poignant reminder of the personal tragedies resulting almost daily from the anti-Communist hysteria of that period. But the piece, for all its fascinating detail, omits the principal argument used by opponents of Lubell's election to the *Law Review* and consequently fails to provide appropriate answers or guides for the future. I refer to the contention that Lubell was under Communist discipline and therefore lacked the independence of thought and mind to which the *Review* aspired (analogous to the argument made by Norman Thomas and others against Communist teachers). As one who advocated Lubell's election to the *Law Review* at that time and believed that a great injustice was being done to him, I think the piece would have been far more valuable had it dealt with the basic contention of our opponents.

The widespread acceptance of that contention was evidenced at the annual Frankfurter Law Clerks' dinner in 1953. The Justice himself and almost all of the law clerks believed that a Communist could not meet the *Law Review*'s standards of integrity. . . . Alexander Bickel was the leading advocate for the contrary proposition that Communist discipline, such as it was, was not wholly different from the preconceptions the other *Law Review* editors brought to their work, that civil freedom was best furthered by having all viewpoints, including the Communist, represented on the *Review* and, that Harvard should be an example of resistance to the hysteria rather than acquiescing in it. I thought that was right then and still do. I am glad Harvard has made such amends as it could.

Joseph L. Rauh, Jr.

Pahoa, Hawaii

The *Harvard Law Review*'s public apology to Jonathan Lubell is only one of many cases of restitution now being made for wrongs committed during the cold-war period. One of the most refreshing cases is that of Dr. John Reinecke and his wife Aiko who were among the first victims of postwar anti-Communist hysteria.

After teaching in Hawaii's public schools for a combined total of thirty-six years the Reineckes in 1947 were summarily suspended without pay by the Territorial Commissioners of Public Instruction fourteen days after Governor Stainback made an Armistice Day speech in which he promised "to expose and dismiss all Territorial employees involved in Communist activities."

A public hearing for the Reineckes months later [revealed] not a shred of evidence . . . that the Reineckes ever abused their teaching responsibilities or that they were unqualified to teach. The principal of Farrington High School testified that Dr. Reinecke "was a very good teacher, one of the best we have. . . ." Aiko Reinecke was apparently "guilty" because she was John's wife. The entire case against them was an assault on their political beliefs and their activities in helping working people organize unions, particularly the ILWU which had become powerful enough to demand decent wages and working conditions for plantation workers and longshoremen. . . . Both Reineckes were fired and John was stripped of his teaching credentials. They later suffered losses in their pension and Social Security payments.

Early in 1976 a group of citizens formed a "Committee to Secure Justice for the Reineckes." Thousands of names were collected on petitions which were presented to the Hawaii Board of Education. As a result the board (following a public hearing) revoked the decision of the Territorial Commissioners to dismiss the Reineckes and restored the teaching certificate of Dr. Reinecke. The board also recommended compensating them for back pay and adjusting their pensions to the amount they would have received had they continued teaching to age 65. . . . Instead of appropriating funds to reimburse the Reineckes for the thirty years they were barred from teaching, the state legislature lifted the statute of limitations on the case so the couple could seek redress in the courts. After a court hearing, the Reineckes (who are well into their 70s) agreed to settle for $250,000. By the time you receive this letter the legislature will undoubtedly have appropriated this amount for a very happy ending.

William Reich

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SPRING BOOK ISSUE

Drifting Left: Four New Magazines

JAMES BOYLAN

Four new politically oriented magazines have appeared on the Left, or somewhere at least vaguely in that region. They are different from their predecessors; they do not, for example, come at the reader with the messy outrage of the underground press of the 1960s. Their approach is friendly, even cozy. One of them promises to be "the magazine which is on your side." Another is "for people who want to understand and act upon the gut issues of today." A third swears that its "concern is you." And one is "a magazine for the rest of us"—a slogan chillingly, if unintentionally, resembling James Buckley's 1970 Conservative campaign epigram: "Isn't it time *we* had a Senator?"

Brief introductions:

The magazine "on your side" is *Seven Days,* senior in this group by virtue of having published tryout issues as far back as 1975, although it is only this spring working up to the frequency its name suggests. Its roots lie, in good part, through its best-known editor, Dave Dellinger, in the anti-war movement and in the now suspended *Liberation* magazine. It acquired part of its early readership by taking over the stranded subscribers of *Ramparts.*

Seven Days is not the organ of a movement. Its announced purpose has been to become a news magazine, an answer to *Time* or *Newsweek,* without such encumbrances as corporate advertising or the profit motive. *Seven Days* is published by a "not-for-profit" association, the Institute for New Communications, and does not accept display advertising. It claims, without offering statistics, to contain more editorial copy than the establishment weeklies, but a quick count shows that any edge must depend on such niceties as type size and space given to photos; in total editorial pages, *Newsweek* and *Time* have a clear lead.

More important, *Seven Days* tries to provide a flow of alternative news, a different view of the world. On the basis of issues published through March 1978, my judgment is that its success has been mixed. In covering major stories, *Seven Days* often has little new to add; for example, its material on the mine workers' strike added obligatory grace notes of sympathy with the strikers, but not much else. Its cover story on the breakup of a Soviet satellite over Canada turned into a conventional sci-fi scare. By contrast, *Seven Days* is more successful when it moves away from the headlines and tries to work on a different agenda; its stories from the Third World compensate for a void in conventional news media. What *Seven Days* lacks here is system, perhaps because its stringer network is not yet complete.

Seven Days must also work to rise above the amateurism that now mars its pages. Although it has settled, after experiment, into a workable format, in execution *Seven Days is* fault-ridden. Stories are dotted with the kinds of misspelling and mispunctuation that are the educational heritage of our era; worse, the writing is labored, often couched in the reporterese that comes out of Newswriting 101—blotched with needless quotation, innocent of structure or conciseness. *Seven Days* leaves the reader feeling that it may be trying still to get by on having its heart in the right place.

Mother Jones—the "magazine for the rest of us"—has been published ten times a year since March 1976. Like *Seven Days, Mother Jones* is published by a nonprofit organization, this one styled the Foundation for National Progress. Unlike *Seven Days, Mother Jones* is in almost every other respect a commercial magazine, down to the computer insignium on the front cover and the Winston ad on the back. The name of the magazine —that of the well-remembered labor activist—suggests a voice of the working class. To be sure, *Mother Jones* covers the poor and the laboring, but its soul seems to lie elsewhere. The February/March issue has a color photo of models—in the style that should be called Felkeresque—purporting to show the unfortunate Larry Flynt in a clerical collar, being fondled by a female. Inside, a story on Flynt occupies 13 pages, more than a quarter of the issue's editorial space. The magazine employs a variety of trendy magazine gadgets, such as the ragout of cute boxed items offered, scrapbook-fashion, at the front, and the annual "awards" originated by *Esquire.*

Even while offering the mild iconoclasm of, say, *Rolling Stone* or *New Times, Mother Jones* avers that

INQUIRY. *Williamson M. Evers, editor. 1700 Montgomery Street, San Francisco, Calif. 94111. $1.25; $17.50 a year; biweekly (24 issues).*

MOTHER JONES. *Adam Hochschild, Jeffrey Klein, Louise Kollenbaum, Amanda Spake, editorial board. 607 Market Street, San Francisco, Calif. 94105. $1.25; $12 a year; monthly (10 issues).*

POLITICKS & OTHER HUMAN INTERESTS. *Thomas B. Morgan, editor in chief. 271 Madison Avenue, New York N.Y. 10016. $1; $18 a year; biweekly (22 issues).*

SEVEN DAYS. *206 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010. $1; $15.60 for 26 issues.*

James Boylan is editor of the Columbia Journalism Review, *a nonprofit commercial magazine published by the Graduate School of Journalism, Columbia University.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

its real subject is social change. In this, it emulates the great pop-Left success of the 1960s, *Ramparts*, and, indeed, *Ramparts* alumni are prominent on the staff of *Mother Jones*. But *Mother Jones* is somehow softer. It has political articles, but these are often little more than routine cynical comment on stars such as Jimmy Carter or Jerry Brown. *Mother Jones* does its most serious work in exposing corporate sin—the manufacture of an infection-producing contraceptive device or the dangers of immolation in a Ford Pinto. Such exposures are worthy on their own terms, but even they leave a reader feeling they are a concession—a kind of investigative consumerism designed for audiences that might care little for social change as such.

Politicks & Other Human Interests ("for people who want to understand and act") is a different enterprise entirely. It is a very plain magazine, on 11-by-14-inch rough paper, with no photographs and—aside from handsome black-and-white illustrations—little decoration of any kind. Published biweekly since October 1977, *Politicks*—which is edited by Thomas B. Morgan, a former would-be purchaser of *The Nation*—avowedly tries to stir readers from apathy. A section called "The Citizen's Companion" lists meetings, organizations and publications on a fistful of current topics—abortion, nuclear power, environment. The rest of the magazine contains signed articles, written in great part by a stable of columnists that includes Barry Commoner, Edwin Diamond, Walter Karp, Alan Baron, Kirkpatrick Sale and Ronald Steel. Each issue also contains an extended interview.

To date—in my opinion, at least—*Politicks* does not yet seem to work as well as it should. Despite the seasoned writers, the apt choice of issues, and the strong illustration, *Politicks* remains for me a little of a drag. One deficiency appears to be the pencil editing—not merely technical slips (of which there are too many) but a working of the writing into its most coherent form. Only rarely does *Politicks* sparkle. (Who does, these days?) Another problem may lie with the writers themselves. Have they helped *Politicks* create a character of its own, or have they simply brought well-rehearsed acts in under a new tent?

There may be another difficulty of editorship as well. The direction of the magazine remains obscure. The editors have announced a credo that includes such statements as: "We oppose the dominance of any interest other than the people's." The epigram has the ring of old-time progressivism, but the reader wants more to cling to. How has *Politicks* defined the "people's" interest in any given issue? Is it the definition of the writer assigned to the article? Or is it simply assumed, circular fashion, that whatever a *Politicks* writer offers is in the people's interest?

Inquiry, whose "concern is you," is billing itself as "America's most outspoken new magazine." Backed by the Cato Foundation, it first appeared in November 1977. Without trial issues or other fumbling about, it seemed to jell at once—a sober, attractive design, clean editing, authoritative writers, and even an editorial policy. Perfect—except that it really does not offer the reader a lot as yet. All but adless, *Inquiry* has been publishing 32 pages an issue, with more than a third devoted to reviews and columns. There is room left for perhaps two major articles. These have included a report on death camps in Paraguay, a critique of the Carter human-rights policy, and a study by Peter Schrag of the "therapeutic state." The columnists include the ubiquitous Nat Hentoff, the historian Barton J. Bernstein, the psychiatrist Thomas Szasz, and *The Washington Post*'s columnist-in-exile, Nicholas Von Hoffman.

Again, the tone is not outrage as a rule, but concerned indignation. Nor does *Inquiry* offer outright an ideology of its own, aside from a conventional antipathy to abuses of official power. Its mix is palatable and stimulating but, as with *Politicks*, a little puzzling as to direction.

Does the appearance of these magazines constitute a wave, or even a trend? Not necessarily, for someone is always starting a magazine. (Two other contemporary enterprises in the political field are the worthy bimonthly, *Working Papers for a New Society* and the socialist-oriented tabloid from Chicago, *In These Times*.) The four under discussion here represent a new turn, in that they share to a degree a first objective of ingratiating themselves. Their second-person approach—this is a magazine that can help *you*—is partly, of course, mere direct-mail hype. Even so, there is a tendency among them to sublimate the anger that has been the classic

MEETING

It would need witchcraft to see your face
of twenty years ago, and mine, revived,
confronted as if resurrected ghosts—

a banshee ceremony, screams and cries,
to call them back, those masks of flesh dissolved,
remade, and formed not by the grave but life.

What would the younger pair think of us now?
Might that half-wild girl still fall in love,
or you be charmed by what I have become?

Could who we were agree to such a future—
already our past, denied or mostly forgotten—
having our memories as foreknowledge?

How can there be a hope of recognition
when every cell has been renewed and altered,
the pattern coarsened through repetition?

Yet those four, meeting like strangers
outside time and matter's flux, accept
their actuality, and never question

the others' realness. Amazed and fascinated,
they wait to hear confirming words, or intercept
the one appropriate gesture of release.

Ruth Fainlight

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

emotion of the Left.

They have put on other, less disturbing masks. *Seven Days* places itself opposite *Time* and *Newsweek* not only, it appears, for contrast but also to set itself in the comforting genre of "news magazine." *Mother Jones* tries to look like *New York* or *Esquire*. *Politicks* and *Inquiry* call themselves political magazines outright, but at the same time defuse anxiety with nonideological platforms.

Each in its way, moreover, pays tribute to the norms of journalism. *Inquiry* claims to "adhere to the highest standards of journalistic style and factual accuracy." *Seven Days* makes its bow to "seeking out the news beneath the surface rather than depending on paid government or corporate public relations experts"; *Editor & Publisher*, the newspaper trade weekly, would not have said it any differently. *Politicks* acknowledges a relationship to "weekly news magazines" and *Mother Jones* often casts itself in the familiar investigative mode.

Is the key, then, that these new magazines are keeping pet ideologies in the closet in an effort to find a bigger, nonideological public? That doesn't seem to be the case. None of them leaves an impression that there is a program behind the program—that is, a set of unannounced goals to which their material contributes. In fact, they may share with much of the rest of journalism the difficulty of dealing with the present diffuseness of political discourse, the erosion of issues through personalization (gossip) and mechanization (obsession with the machinery, not the substance, of the system).

It is noteworthy that only one of these four periodicals has any editorials, and even *Inquiry* confines itself to a single brief opinion in each issue. Although critics have been declaring editorial writing dead for more than a century, it still seems to me that it can serve political magazines well, both in extending the range of issues and helping the editors and the readers reach an understanding of priorities. If a magazine simply farms out all it has to say on the issues, readers may learn what an individual writer thinks but may still miss the crystallizing effect of an editorial. For example, *Seven Days* for March 24 gives 8 pages to a series of articles on nuclear power; it would have been helpful to have, say, Dave Dellinger step from behind the editorial curtain and explain why *Seven Days* believes, if it does, that this is a critical moment in the resistance to nukes. Another: *Politicks* carries in its February 28th issue a long, engrossing interview with Allen Weinstein, the scholar who has concluded that Alger Hiss was guilty as charged. An editor's assessment of what Weinstein says could have helped readers start forming their own opinions.

Such recommendations amount, of course, to criticizing these magazines for not being what they have chosen not to be. It is possible that they have forsworn editorials as coercive, obsolescent, or dull. Too bad, because conceivably editorial policies might help cure what seems to be the most common fault of these magazines—indirection. □

REVIEWING POETRY

Where Have All the Critics Gone?

ROBERT BLY

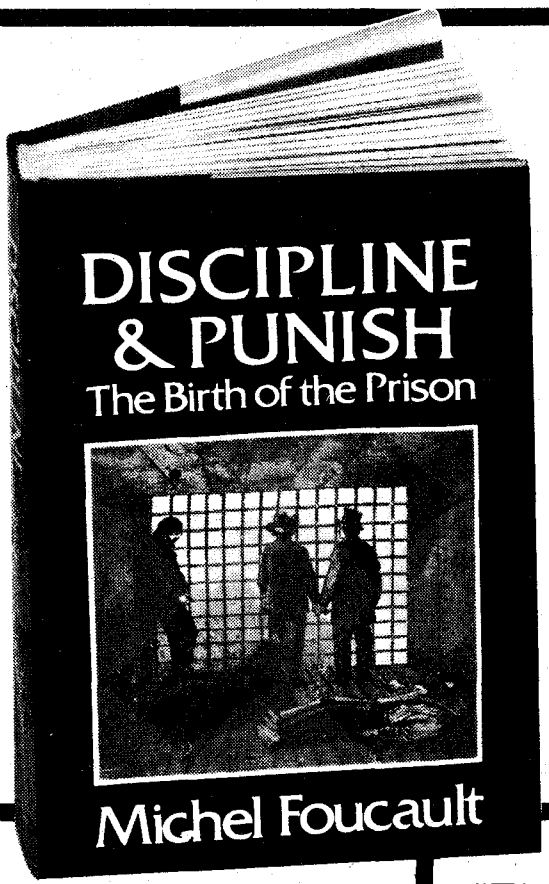
I'm going to make a few remarks on the disappearance of New Criticism, and after that disappearance, the fading of the whole profession of public criticism, which was once a fruitful way for a man or woman to use his or her intelligence.

When we read the magazines, we *feel* there is little criticism around. In fact, a new book of poetry published in the last decade may get only one or two reviews. Reviews appear, but with not much energy. Obviously, too many books get printed. A critic then reviews his friend's new book, to make sure it gets at least one review, and as that happens, fewer critics look dispassionately at the whole spectrum. *APR*, the tabloid *American Poetry Review*, does not cover the spectrum. Instead of running reviews that might cause dissension, *APR* prints a 20-page article simply patting the feathers of some established poet, articles so boring that even graduate students can't read them without weeping. There is something sheeplike in criticism: one year everyone reviews Ashbery, but no one reviews Rukeyser or Rexroth or Logan. The big review places don't do enough, but the little magazines are just as bad. Whole issues appear with poems on every page, and not one review; and the editor feels "more creative" doing that. *The Nation*, *The New Republic* and *The New York Times Book Review* do moderately well in reviewing poetry, compared to certain times in the past, but everywhere the huge amount of poetry being published simply swamps the criticism printed.

More and more books of poetry are appearing, more and more of them supported by National Foundation for the Arts and Humanities grants. This artificial priming, or governmental interference, is having bad effects. The grants now support magazines that would otherwise mercifully have died. If you're an editor, and you're putting out an issue on time *to get your grant*, the easiest thing is to fill it with poems. If they're bad, you say, "At least I'm helping the poet to get started!" It's less trouble than printing criticism. First of all, printing reviews involves assigning the books, correspondence with the writer, mailing the books, checking the prose, and besides, reviews

Robert Bly's recent books are The Kabir Book: 44 Ecstatic Poems of Kabir (*Beacon Press*), *and* This Body Is Made of Camphor and Gopherwood (*Harper and Row*.)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



"Michel Foucault has found his appointed subject and has written his most successful book."*

Michel Foucault, author of the classic study, *Madness and Civilization* sweeps aside nearly three centuries of sterile penal debate to show us what prisons are today, and what they have always been—places which serve only to define, refine, and perpetuate crime.

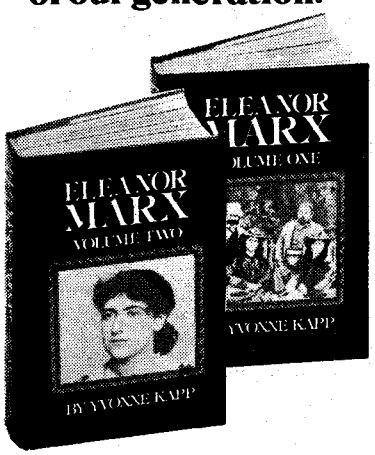
"Brilliant...a formidable exploration." —*Kirkus Reviews*

"Passionately argued, somber and dramatic...Shakes our confidence that our own humane methods are improvements."
—WALTER CLEMONS, *Newsweek*

*"**Fascinating**...A powerful and genuine originality of thought."
—CLIFFORD GEERTZ,
N.Y. Review of Books

$10.95, now at your bookstore
PANTHEON

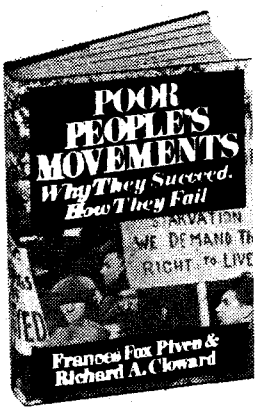
"One of the major biographies of our generation."*



*"**Magnificent and definitive.** Anyone interested in Marx, the history of Socialism, women's emancipation or Victorian Britain will find it difficult to put down."
—E.J. HOBSBAWM, *The New Statesman*

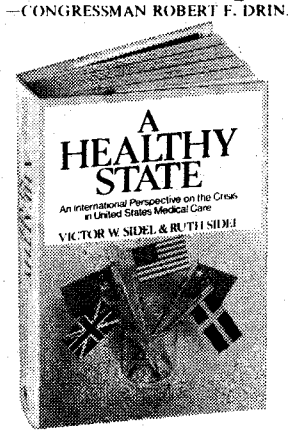
Volume One: $10, cloth; $4.95, paper
Volume Two: $17.95, cloth; $6.95, paper

"The most exciting and important political study in years."*



*"**Essential reading**...It challenges the received wisdom about reform and social change. In particular, the discussions of the civil rights and welfare rights movements are gems."—S.M. MILLER, Chairman, Department of Sociology, Boston University. $12.95

"I have never seen a better case put together for a comprehensive national health plan."
—CONGRESSMAN ROBERT F. DRINAN



"The book we have all been waiting for...The Sidels have defined the issues."—QUENTIN YOUNG, M.D., Cook County Hospital. $10.95

NOW AVAILABLE IN PAPERBACK:

SARTRE ON THEATER by Jean-Paul Sartre. "A model of what real, dedicated scholarship should be...For the theater lover and the student of theater." *The New Republic*. $3.95

LIFE/SITUATIONS: Essays Written and Spoken by Jean-Paul Sartre. "Bristles with intellectual vigor." *Kirkus Reviews*. $2.95

SIMONE WEIL: A Life by Simone Pétrement. "The fullest and best-documented biography we have of a remarkable religious and social thinker."
—ALFRED KAZIN. $5.95

Now at your bookstore PANTHEON

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bring you enemies. Who knows but that the best friend of the poet you just attacked may be on the board of the National Endowment grants? Maybe he is the nephew of your department chairman? A few little magazines persistently print lively criticism; *Ironwood* comes to mind, *Kayak, Parnassus, Moon and Lion Tailes*, but most criticism is done verbally, and not printed except in theses buried in libraries.

We have an odd situation: although more bad poetry is being published now than ever before in American history, most of the reviews are positive. Critics say, "I never attack what is bad, all that will take care of itself," or "Life is too short to spend time on what is no good; I only write about what I like." That would be nice if we were all gods, but the country is full of young poets and readers who are confused by seeing mediocre poetry praised, or never attacked, and who end up doubting their own critical perceptions. When the older men remain silent on what they despise, the younger ones get confused. Part of it comes from the 1960s, and its odd belief that criticism is an attempt to put down the young or minorities. Nearly every woman now knows that an editor will give her new book of poems to a woman, and it will be praised, even if the critic can find only three praisable lines in it. Reviews in *MS* are a good example. This is condescending to women poets, and no help to anyone. Younger male poets are also considered tender blooms, whom a harsh word will wither. Everyone becomes a minority.

This overindulgence follows from the most serious disturbance in poetry of the last thirty years—the emergence of "poetry workshops" in the universities. The other day Wendell Berry said to me, "I'm disturbed about poetry becoming a commodity. Robert, there are no poetry teachers left in this country!" I asked him what he meant, and he spoke of the way teachers in this country tend to treat their workshop in such a way as to receive support from the students. "That is not teaching." Good teaching clearly throws the student against the wall. Before workshops, young poets learned by comparing their poems to Yeats's, and that was very depressing. Yeats did not comfort them. The Chinese have a story of a teacher who overturned his student in a boat, and whenever the student put his head above the water, the teacher poked him under with a long pole. That's very different from granting MFAs. The University of Iowa workshop under Justice and Bell is famous for this overencouragement, especially of the like-minded.

We all love encouragement, so the students receive their MFAs, and then overencourage their students in return, or become editors who don't judge, but encourage. Allen Ginsberg once said something true about this. A reporter at a poetry conference, I think in Vancouver, asked him if he and the other teachers had taught the principles of American prosody. "No," Allen said, "we were all bankrupt and ran around weeping, asking the students for love." I don't mean that this is what happens at Iowa or Amherst or Naropa always, or at all workshops anytime, but I think that a teacher of writing to be good has to have enough love so that he doesn't ask it from his students. People like me who don't teach tend to ask the audience for love at a poetry reading, and that's no good either.

The overencouragement that one feels in Naropa, in Iowa, in Montana, in Amherst leads to similar beneficence in reviewing. It has even risen to the highest levels of critical theory. Harold Bloom, an intelligent man, differs from his critical colleagues of thirty years ago, such as Edmund Wilson or Ivor Winters, in that he refuses to look at the broad spectrum of what is coming out, and do the critic's job, which is to separate the rotten grain from the sound, without fear of being wrong, and without implied approval by silence. Wilson did that well in fiction; Ehrenpreis does it once in a while in poetry now. But Bloom chooses instead a couple of positive poets—in his case A.R. Ammons and John Ashbery—and feels his responsibility to contemporary poetry is fulfilled by elevating them. Their poetry deserves praise, but somehow the whole project is wrong in mood and results, and sets a poor example for other critics. The poets in return tend to dedicate their books to Bloom, and then where is harsh old Edmund Wilson? Nowhere. Ammons and Ashbery do not need elevation anyway, but criticism, so as to help them move on into something new.

I believe very much in the community providing, now and then, the kick that helps the wheel to keep turning. We all have more in us than comes out. Harold Bloom teaches poets to wrestle with dead fathers; but it seems to me also important for poets to wrestle with, even attack, living fathers and living sons. My own generation of poets, Kinnell, Snyder, Rich, Levertov, Simpson, Ginsberg, Hall, Merwin, Stafford, et al., has not been attacked enough by younger poets. Being rude to older poets is just a way of clearing ground for yourself. As my remarks make clear, I believe in a healthy pugnacity in criticism.

I have one more idea on the disappearance of criticism as an art, and that is that criticism these days is connected in the American unconscious with the working class, and "creativity" with being above the working class. Receiving an MFA does not certify you as a poet—no one can do that—but it certifies you as no longer a blue-collar person. Of course we are then grateful to the Lord of the Castle who lifted us out of the beet fields. So these Empires of Mutual Affection or empires of like-sounding poets produced at Iowa or St. Marks resemble those parties of government officials in Chekhov or Tolstoy, talking quietly, so glad to be able to wear white gloves.

Surely true creativity is linked with revolution, with what Blake calls "Orc" energy. . . . But no revolutionary poetry is coming out of the workshops, no poetry that even touches on political subjects. However, if this MFA "creativity" is a narrow ladder leading out of the working class, how could it be revolutionary? Impossible. "The climber turns his back to those below."

What I'm suggesting then is that in the curious link of workshop creativity with white-collar work, criticism and the labor of criticism somehow got left behind in the Russian village, with the mud and the pigs. It is a "not desirable" work. How else can you explain the contrast

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

between the wonderful pride in critical intelligence that John Crowe Ransom showed, as well as Parrington and Brooks and Blackmur and Hyman and Wilson, with the shamefaced stuff that comes out now? Where are the critics with a wide sweep, with a joy in their own critical intelligence, and a willingness to be harsh? I see Kenneth Rexroth. I see Susan Sontag. . . . Who else?

I have a practical suggestion, and that is that every person publishing poetry or fiction in this country take a vow to review two books every six months. If the "critics" have lost morale, and are not reappearing in strength, then the poets and novelists will have to do the criticism themselves, ourselves. It's a bit like learning to clean your own house. The servants used to do it. So we don't wait to be assigned books by an editor, but assign them ourselves, and then see later about getting them printed.

In our situation we need what Kabir calls "servants," people willing to do the hard work around literature, separate weak work from strong, separate photography from art, people with a joy in their own intellect and judging capacity. □

Living in the House of Fiction

E.L. DOCTOROW

These remarks are from a speech given to the Japan American Literature Society, Tohoku Gakuin University, Japan.

It may be a mistake for an author to talk of his own work. It may be more of a mistake for an audience to listen to him. The author's mind is in his books—even those not yet written. The experience of the creative act does not fulfill the ego but changes its nature. As you write you are less the person you ordinarily are: the situation confers strength. An idea, an image, a scene comes to you as an act of discovery and you do not possess what you write any more than an explorer possesses the mountain he climbs. But when you speak of your own work you inevitably present yourself as an authority, and both you and your audience are deceived.

I write what I find it possible to write. I find a voice, a diction, an intonation, before I can intend to write anything. Early in my professional life I didn't know this truth and would construct outlines for books or research subjects for books—I would intend to write books. And none of them would get written. It was only when I gave myself to the act of writing, trusting it to discover what it was that I wanted to write, that I began to do work that did not entirely displease me.

It is not that you have no intellect when you write. Nor is it that you have no passions or politics. It is that nothing good can be expected from merely filling in what you already know. You must trust the act of writing to scan all the passions and convictions already in your mind; but these must defer to the fortuitousness of the work, they must be *of* it.

That is why ideologically committed writers, brilliant political persons, engaged artists, often write material that is born dead. Their ideas are stamped out on their work, cutting and forming it according to needs exterior to it. W.H. Auden said a writer's politics are more of a danger to him than his cupidity. And that's the paradox: the intent of literature is everything, its value, its justification; but the writer must allow this intent to discover itself, he must write to find out what it is he's writing, or everything will be ruined.

Having said this I want to tell you it is the standard wisdom of American writers. It is our piety. Carried to the extreme it exonerates the worst sort of aesthetic solipsism: the creative act becomes a total mystery, the artist a mystic, and any piece of pointless trash a triumph of self-expression. My point of view has turned many a writer into an academic dandy, purveyed literature as an intellectually elitist activity, and denied art any connection to life whatsoever. So like all pieties it leads directly to sin.

Of course the Marxist literary theoretician would condemn all of us, Doctorow no less than the dandies, for engaging in an activity, fiction, whose very form and being promotes bourgeois culture. The artist, no matter how critical or angry or politically dissenting his work may be, is inevitably a conservator of the regime; mere witness does not threaten the structure of power—indeed, giving people the illusion of their freedom in the perception of injustice will vent any truly revolutionary impulses they may have and actually reduce the likelihood of change. Even if you disagree, there is a discouraging amount of historical evidence that art doesn't change anything. As Auden said, all the anti-Fascist poems of the 1930s did nothing to stop Hitler.

In the United States there is current one literary/political movement, the new literature of the aggrieved woman, that may yet produce its magnificent work. But the feeling I have is that the women writers, no less than the men, are under direction of the culture. Rather than making the culture we seem these days to be in it. American culture suggests an infinitely expanding universe that generously accommodates, or imprisons, us all. And one peculiar result of this is that most novels published today seem very private, or lacking in social reverberation. Everyone is talking about Private Life. It is odd, even funny, I know, to hear this complaint from a novelist. After all, what else is there?

But if you consider the possibility that human identity is changing or has changed, then it is clear we novelists don't know it yet. We have either given up entirely the

E.L. Doctorow is the author of Welcome to Hard Times, The Book of Daniel *and* Ragtime.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

large examination of society to the social scientists and the journalists, or are simply reporting, second hand, the identity they have made for us—the neurotic individual identity. Some of the writing produced under these conditions is very beautiful. But there does not seem to be any new legislation lately from the unacknowledged legislators of the world. Many seriously aspiring writers are at work, all sorts of talented writers—realists, ethnicists, fabulists, avant-gardists, genrists—and the best of us all, the most individual voices among us, seem lately only to be clearing their throats. The novel as a major and transforming act of the culture is still the desire of many of us, but for too many a receding desire. There are only two schools of literature in my country, the school that vacations in eastern Long Island, and the school that summers in Martha's Vineyard. And we have also that well-known crisis of faintheartedness from novelists who have broken and run to journalism for want of a subject.

Then what do I want? As a novelist talking about literature, I don't know what I want. A critic would know what he wanted. A novelist wants whatever it is he will write. As a working writer I can't go along with the Marxist theoretician—he may be right but the alternative he offers me is silence. I'd rather all of us, readers and writers, took our chances. Novels can find out things, they can bring into being constituencies of consciousness, they can give courage. Their possibilities are endless. But a theory is a closed system, all it can do is congratulate itself.

It occurs to me here that I might have unconsciously turned these remarks into fiction. That what I'm saying may be a story whose meaning has to be derived. After all, I first made a claim for the self-justification of fiction writing, and then attempted to dissociate myself from the conservatism inherent in the claim. I then made a vaguely leftist critique of the lack of social potency in today's fiction, and almost immediately dissociated myself from the theoretical basis of such a critique. Clearly we are dwelling here in ambiguity.

People always try to pin labels on writers or pour some sort of shrinking solution on them, and this is understandable. The problem is that we use the same language everyone uses and so would seem to express the same kind of intelligence or capacity for judgment. But while employing the common language, we give it different currency, we value it differently. What we perceive may be mythic or metaphoric but is presented in the language of factuality, and that's where the trouble lies. Writers have always been adopted by political movements and then abandoned by them because of the ambiguities latent in what they do. Fiction is a different way of knowing, it is intuitive and undifferentiated knowledge, it antedates all the specialty disciplines of a modern society, including politics. This fact is too easily obscured as artists from one age to another advance its techniques and take on the coloration of modernity.

Henry James proposes a little parable to illuminate this idea: he says that if a young woman who had lived a sheltered life walked past an army barracks and heard a fragment of soldiers' conversation coming through the window, she could, if she were a novelist, go home and write an accurate novel about army life. I find this accords with my experience. My life has not been sheltered, but I know I can hope to write well about places I've never seen and times before I was born, and about people who are not me.

Of course this is not generally viewed as a trustworthy talent. The writer sits alone in a room and composes alternative worlds, worlds that impose on, reveal, or obfuscate the real one. People would rather trust knowledge that comes to them in discreet, measurable units, identified as to discipline, and presented by experts. No aspect of modern life can be maintained now without experts. They stand between us and our experience as, for example, the medical profession stands between mothers and motherhood. The novelist, who is an expert in nothing if he is to function properly, is not a part of this system. He therefore lacks authority, which might explain why in recent years in America the writers have infiltrated the universities and established graduate degrees in fiction and poetry writing. This appalling recourse is a means, presumably, of bestowing the authority that at an earlier time we had depended on our work to give us.

The cultural role today of film directors is instructive in this context. Directors of films are society's culture heroes. Why? I think because they are artist/executives. They work in public. They marshal talent of several

THE GEESE

Stepping out onto the back porch
in the early evenings of November,
I hear from the darkness
as if it were the darkness
the hissing, the dumb
unfriendly voices of geese.

But in the mornings, in the cold
decorum of light, its lovely
obligations, I walk
in the crackling garden, scuffing
my boots in the frozen
green hillocks of goose droppings,

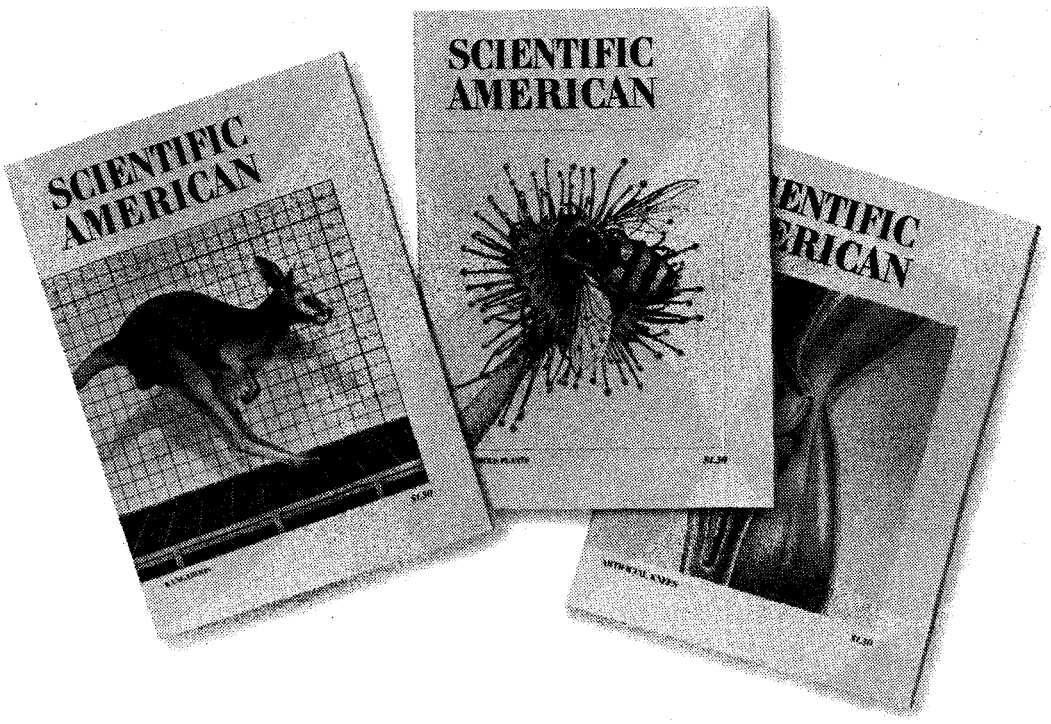
shiver, and watch the Toulouse geese
parading their coop roof, the goose yard
shining with spread wings. But always
night comes and the moon dims
in a blue web of cloud, and the birch
at the yard's far edge sways
like the white necks of geese;
and each time I feel night as a bird,

and myself caught in the warm angle of dark
between wing and body of a bird,
sharing the convulsion of desire it is
to beat down on the stony planet,
and rise and fly.

John Engels

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Science is not a looseleaf notebook!"



On the contrary, the late Jacob Bronowski declared, scientific knowledge is a system of understanding, an ever more coherent picture of man and nature.

SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN each month reveals this coherence to its readers, for it is the *one* magazine that brings together the important new advances in all the sciences.

Thus, no matter how much of a specialist you may be at work, in the pages of SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN you can enjoy being a generalist at leisure.

Our readers have kept abreast of all the major developments that have made the last three decades so momentous in intellectual history. Consider what has occurred: the unlocking of the genetic code ... the discovery of continental drift ... the recognition of toolmaking in our biological evolution ... the proof of uncertainty in logic ... the arrival of the laser, of microelectronics ... the revelation of the nerve circuitry that organizes perception ... the penetration of the structure of the fundamental particles ... the expanding exploration of the solar system.

To our readers all this has been reported by the scientists who did the work. (Some 65 Nobel prizewinners have written for us, most of them in advance of recognition by Stockholm.)

The collaboration of our editors in the preparation of text and illustration makes this work accessible to a growing worldwide readership.

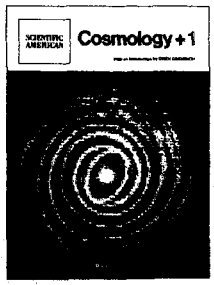
Why not join our more than 675,000 regular readers at the frontiers of knowledge? You will learn why The New York Times calls SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, "This country's and perhaps the world's outstanding forum for communication between scientists and the intelligent public."

Use the coupon below to begin enjoying the diversity of articles in each monthly issue. A one-year subscription is only $18. A two-year subscription, at $33, saves $3. And a three-year subscription, at $45, saves you $9.

Send no money. We'll bill you.

SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN

WITH YOUR SUBSCRIPTION



THIS BONUS BOOK

As soon as your subscription payment is received, we will also send you *Cosmology +1* (regular price: $4.50), as a bonus. This anthology from SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN explores the radio galaxies, black holes, the curvature of space, quasars and: Will the universe expand forever? Is there intelligent life elsewhere?

SUBSCRIPTION RESERVATION

SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN 415 Madison Avenue, Dept. N4, New York, N.Y. 10017

Please enter my subscription to the monthly issues of SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN for the term I have checked. I understand that you will also send me —absolutely free—the 124-page book *Cosmology +1* (regular price: $4.50), as soon as my payment is received.

YOUR GUARANTEE

You may cancel your subscription to SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN at any time and receive a refund for the balance of your subscription. The bonus book is yours to keep.

Name

Address

City/State/Zip

☐ 1 year—$18 ☐ 2 years—$33 (save $3) ☐ 3 years—$45 (save $9)

☐ Bill me ☐ My payment is enclosed

(Subscription rates outside U.S. and Canada: 1 year—$22 2 years—$40 3 years—$55)

N4

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

kinds, or experts ot several sorts—actors, photographers, set designers, sound and lighting specialists—and bring them together in an intricately timed logistical process; and the result is a nonverbal, that is to say factual, material, film, that has the additional glory of having cost a great deal of money to produce. The director thus incarnates all the values of creativity, as modified by our ideals of teamwork, technological expertise and capital value. Directors don't sit alone in rooms with their language trying to figure out what is true. They hire writers to do that for them.

But I don't really see the arts competing with one another, like ball teams from different cities. Nor am I trying to place blame for the current state of fiction on life or society. That would be tedious. I'm not even sure, to tell the truth, what the current state of fiction is. Some critics I respect find the prospects hopeful. I think what I've been trying to do here is apologize for not talking more directly about my work. Perhaps the remarks will be useful nonetheless. If a person reveals himself through his dreams, perhaps a writer does so in his public statements. The condition of my working life as a novelist, as I experience it, is one of immense dissatisfaction with the form, with fiction itself, an impatience with what it has done, a terrible impatience with what I have done with it. That is almost like being in love. At the same time, of course, I imperially project from the character of my own feelings the character of our culture as a whole, and the state of it, and by necessary implication, the state of us all at this time in our lives. The insufficiency of fiction and the need to reform it, I take as metaphor for our need to transform our lives and remake ourselves. I'm sorry I feel this way but it is not from conceit. It is not a matter of thinking big but of remaining alive. If the idea of redemption itself is not by now in total disrepute then I see us all having to go at it in every way we can politically, religiously, aesthetically, scientifically and in daily aroused perception of one another. And if the impulse comes for some wave of serene revelation, who can say how it will begin? □

Reviews and the Arts

Merdistes in Fiction's Garden

ON MORAL FICTION. *By John Gardner. Basic Books. 214 pp. $8.95.*

MAX APPLE

There is a paragraph toward the end of *On Moral Fiction* in which Mr. Gardner tells us about the kind of frustration which must have led him to publish his beliefs about art in this form.

> . . . I've been in conversations where no one seemed to care about the truth, where people argued merely to win, refused to listen or try to understand, threw in irrelevancies—some anecdote without conceivable bearing, some mere ego flower. A thousand times I have heard some person—some casual acquaintance about whom I had no strong feeling—cruelly vilified, and have found that to rise in defense of mere fairness is to become, suddenly, the enemy. I have witnessed, repeatedly, university battles in which no one on any side would stoop to plain truth.

The strength of Gardner's argument comes from his conviction that this "plain truth" is before our eyes. It is the argument of the prophet, the one whose vision is not clouded by the ephemera of his particular time. And such righteous indignation is a strong rhetorical device. The mere force of Gardner's conviction carries a lot of weight. His model seems to be Tolstoy who also sought the "plain truth" and found it in what he called "Christian Art." Gardner has substituted the secular idea of the "moral" to salvage for art among other things, Tolstoy's novels. For Tolstoy himself was willing to label all his work "bad art," excepting only the stories, "God Sees the Truth but Waits" and "A Prisoner of the Caucasus."

Pronouncements like Tolstoy's indicate the danger of any monolithic system whether it be called "Christian" or "moral" or "structural." But Gardner is aware of this and is really trying only to clear the air of the jargon of recent criticism and its inevitable effect on taste. He believes that there is some common understanding of how people ought to behave, an understanding that might as well be called "right reason" or "common sense" as any of the more elaborate philosophical terms. It is a feeling that is clear and "moral" and as "old as the hills." Thus Gardner is amazed that most contemporary art, especially fiction, strays so far from this "plain truth."

The particular enemies to the truth as Gardner sees it are the "*merdistes*," the nay-saying offspring of Sartre affecting nausea in the house of culture. After chastising the "existentialists" Gardner's anger moves to the "trivializers." In this category he seems to include most living fiction writers except John Fowles. He then goes on the attack against criticism, that supposed handmaiden of art that is now so perverted by systematizing. Gardner self-consciously chooses words like "good" and "beautiful" and "true" to replace the sterility of a cultural assessment riddled with the cant of "hermeneutic, heuristic, structuralism and formalism."

Because Gardner's anger is honest and wholesome the criticism of his contemporaries never descends to mere vindictiveness or gossip. He simply knows what he likes and why he likes it and is ready to share his beliefs. His straightforward sincerity mingled with his certitude make it difficult to detach oneself from his opinions. Here is a respected and popularly acknowledged novelist getting hold of you the way only a skillful essayist does, whispering the "truth" in your ear. It seems almost rude to reject truths offered with such enthusiasm and good intention, but when Gardner moves from the general to the specific

Max Apple is the author of The Oranging of America and Other Stories *and the forthcoming* Zip (*Viking*).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

it is sometimes as easy to say no to him as it is to the missionary on the street corner. When he tries to ground his argument in the framework of aesthetic theory he is solemnly tedious. When he uses the "touchstones" of Homer or Shakespeare to judge rightly a Ron Sukenick or a William Gass he is indulging in the sort of comic exaggeration he criticizes. Mr. Gardner has the big guns of antiquity in his hip pocket and is quick to use them. His essays on Homer and Dante are splendid interpretations quite apart from their argumentative use in the book. But it sometimes seems as if his admirable sense of the past has distorted his notion of time. The bulk of the argument on literary values concerns fiction written in the past fifteen years. Mr. Gardner is busy judging writers still in the midst of their careers as if they were the "mute inglorious Miltons" of Gray's *Elegy*.

Furthermore, we have the odd circumstance of a serious writer whose own fiction has received acclaim and wide popular acceptance finding threats to the nature of art in the mists of "experimental" fiction where the audience is small enough to fit under Mr. Gardner's fingernail. Indeed, the sense of a literary emergency that Gardner needs to make his book an important document is undermined by the example of a writer like John Fowles who does write "moral fiction" and who is recognized and appreciated for doing so by hundreds of thousands of readers. In fact, Mr. Gardner and Mr. Fowles alone probably account for more readers than the entire list of contemporaries whom Gardner thinks of as trivial.

But since the argument is more spiritual than material let's assume that the threat of the last fifteen years is real enough and look at an example of the dangerous. The main technique of the trivializers is what Mr. Gardner calls "texture," "fiction as pure language." They create what he calls "linguistic sculpture." They focus "their attention on language, gathering nouns and verbs the way a crow collects paper clips sending off their characters and action to take a long nap." Most of us yearn along with Mr. Gardner for more of the meat and potatoes of fictional life, until he moves to a specific example. Mr. Gardner presents, as evidence of "texture," the passage from *Ragtime* in which Mother's Younger Brother falls out of a closet in the midst of ecstasy, "clutching in his hands, as if trying to choke it, a rampant penis which scornful of his intentions, whipped him about the floor, launching to his cries of ecstacy or despair, great filamental spurts of jism that traced the air like bullets and then settled slowly over Evelyn in her bed like falling ticker tape."

Before offering his own judgment of the passage, Mr. Gardner assures us with professorial certitude that Tolstoy "would object." This may be so but Tolstoy also objected very strongly to *King Lear* for its peculiar focus and sympathy for the lives of royalty. As if he understands that invoking Tolstoy is not enough evidence, Gardner tells us that the "falsity" in this passage runs even deeper.

"Doctorow's writing is meretricious, or at the very least frigid in Longinus's sense: the writer is not deeply involved in his characters' lives. Things do not happen in the world as Doctorow claims they do. Even in the hands of young and highly excited men, penises do not behave as Doctorow maintains. Doctorow's mind is elsewhere. He's after a flashy chapter ending and reality can go knit."

In Gardner's criticism of this passage perhaps more clearly than anywhere else in his polemic we are confronted with his absolute sense of the "real."

Though it may be trivial to argue the matter, Doctorow's comic exaggeration does, in fact, seem to be a "true" statement of "how penises behave." Men are often led by lust, whipped not merely about the floor but about the world by rampant desire. Doctorow is no more guilty of going after a "flashy chapter ending" than Homer is when he allows Achilles's mother to sing out in all their musicality the names of her fellow sea nymphs while Achilles, proudest of men, howls in grief for his fallen Patrocles. Fine writing does not have to be "linguistic sculpture" or "frigid in Longinus's sense," and the real is no absolute ingredient in the "true." Reality can "go knit"; it always does when the imagination is more "true." Even Tolstoy said that the quest for a kind of universal realism led only to works which are "to a great extent spoilt by what is usually called 'realism,' but would better be termed 'provincialism' in art."

In all his earnestness Mr. Gardner simply can't read this passage from *Ragtime* the way other far less learned people might. He insists that there is something "light heartedly symbolic"; there is a message which Doctorow "means to preach," but the only preacher here is Mr. Gardner invoking his own "provincialism" in the guise of "reality."

The failure to see the reality within the exaggeration, the moral within the "trivial," may be Mr. Gardner's literary blind spot. No fiction writer ever has immunity from the charge of being a "trivializer." Mr. Gardner wholeheartedly approves of Shakespeare but Tolstoy did not and Ben Jonson had his reservations, and the Puritans closed the theatres.

When Gardner is making the grandiose claims of art in simple language he is most eloquent. "Art asserts and reasserts those values which hold off dissolution . . . rediscovers, generation by generation what is necessary to humanness." He knows that often writers settle for the tricks of style, and that critics tend to fall into the bureaucracy of their diction. His indignation and the general truths he represents should shake us even when the specifics of his argument do not. □

The Unconventional Wisdom

ON PRESS. *By Tom Wicker. The Viking Press. 251 pp. $10.95.*

J. ANTHONY LUKAS

In May 1972, some 3,000 journalists, readers, viewers and "media groupies" gathered at the Martin Luther King Labor Center on New York's West 43rd Street for the first annual A.J. Liebling Counter Convention. The conference was sponsored by MORE, the national journalism review of which I am an editor, to grapple with issues perennially ignored at the conventions of the American Newspaper Publishers Association, which was meeting that same weekend across town at the Waldorf-Astoria.

The Liebling affair was as feisty and irreverent as *The New Yorker*'s late press critic after whom it was named. It drew many notables of the media subculture—among them, I.F. Stone, Tom Wolfe, Gay Talese, Renata Adler, David Halberstam and Jimmy Breslin—but their mood in that year of Nixonian ascendancy was sharply critical of the Establishment, including the media Establishment.

No institution came in for more prod-

J. Anthony Lukas, formerly a New York Times *reporter, is the author of* Nightmare: The Underside of the Nixon Years (*Viking*).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ding and poking that weekend than the mighty, but acutely sensitive, *New York Times* whose stately gray edifice reared, appropriately enough, just across 43rd Street. Not surprisingly, then, although Katherine Graham of *The Washington Post* and other publishers trekked across town to take a quizzical look at our proceedings, few of the *Times*'s editorial hierarchy dared make an appearance.

A striking exception was Tom Wicker who not only attended but promptly accepted our invitation to be the luncheon speaker. I can see him now, his prognathous jaw tilted across the room, boldly questioning much of what has been conventional wisdom at the *Times* and in much of American journalism: the heavy reliance on official sources, the front-page mentality that "imposes such a deadly sameness on our newspapers," the "spurious objectivity" so many editors demand. "We must insist that somehow we have got to be set free to do our best work," he concluded.

There could be little doubt that at least some of this message was directed at the hidden audience across 43rd Street.

That took guts. But then, from my own ten years at the *Times*, I knew Wicker had guts. Of all my former colleagues there, I had come to respect him most: for his courage, for his compassion, for his openness to ideas and —as he puts it here—to "possibilities."

On Press is the story of Wicker's thirty years in the newspaper business. It is worth reading because it breathes his best qualities, assets which any young reporter could do worse than emulate.

I confess to feeling that it could have been still a better book. There are some twice-told tales here—about how the *Times* covered the Bay of Pigs invasion, the Kennedy assassination, the war in Vietnam, the Pentagon Papers and the CIA excesses of recent years—all now getting a bit brown around the edges. There is some rather conventional material on media concentration, on investigative reporting, and on Presidential politics. And the book is rather episodic, a string of disparate observations about the press strung together on a thread so delicate it threatens to break under the strain.

What holds it together is the character of its author and particularly his extraordinary capacity to grow as he ages. The newspaper business is filled with men—and increasingly, thanks to affirmative action, women—who have not grown intellectually or emotionally since they were 30. Indeed, the craft puts a premium on stunted development. After all, reporting—as it is traditionally defined by our journalism schools and pre-eminent institutions—is a rather simple-minded job, requiring primarily the strong legs of youth and the hair-trigger news judgment of post-adolescence.

More perhaps than any other craft, journalism is the conveyor of conventional wisdom. Just as the press begins to understand what is going on, it is no longer going on. More often than not, what we call "news" is the present misunderstood in terms of the recent, but already obsolete, past.

Editors, in particular, have a fatal proclivity for clinging to unquestioned assumptions about reality (because, unlike reporters, they are not often compelled to test their assumptions against the real world). None of us, to be sure, could do without certain unquestioned assumptions. If we had to ask ourselves every time we took a breath whether our lungs would explode or every time we took a step whether we would go crashing through to China, life would be uncertain and unbearable. But for those of us whose job is to try to stay abreast of an ever changing reality, the constant questioning of our freeze-dried concepts is a professional obligation.

Vietnam, we were to learn too late, was not Korea. Geneva was not Munich. Marijuana was not heroin. Shopping centers were not village greens. George McGovern was not Franklin Roosevelt. J. Edgar Hoover was not Elliot Ness.

Tom Wicker's greatest virtue as a reporter is that, ahead of most of us, he understood these things and was able to adapt his mind-set to the shifting kaleidoscope of the past few decades.

Take race relations. "As a Southern liberal and a veteran of school-integration," Wicker writes, "I had long favored 'civil rights' for blacks. The ghetto riots and 'long hot summers' of the sixties forced me, however, to a new conclusion—a relatively simple idea, but fecund; it was to spawn a hundred offspring in later years. I saw that 'granting' rights to blacks, a process reasonably advanced by 1968, would never solve the racial problem in America, because that problem was the *inequality* of blacks in white eyes.

"Those who have to be granted rights by others are not made truly equal by the grant; not until generations pass and granted rights become as inherent as anyone else's does something like equality result. More important, it was not just 'rights' in which the blacks were disadvantaged but income, wealth, status, and power—in none of which were whites ready to 'grant' even the opportunity for equality, much less the fact of it. *That* would have to be wrested from unwilling hands, made the more so by white shock and disillusionment that blacks were not particularly grateful for having been 'granted' rights by those who had for so long deprived them of the same rights."

Wicker concedes that this idea "no doubt offended a lot of complacent white assumptions." But "challenging assumptions," he says, is precisely what a columnist ought to be doing. Unfortunately, it is an endeavor "that wins few thanks and fewer converts . . . it renders a good many Americans uneasy or angry or both."

Judging by the mail and phone calls he has received, that is a pretty good description of what Wicker has done to a lot of Americans. And it is no secret that he has raised some well-combed hackles at the *Times* itself. Although he says he has never had an article or column "killed" or even felt pressure from *Times*'s executives to conform to the newspaper's editorial policy, he "suspect[s] some of my articles have caused my employers discomfort and embarrassment."

But that too comes with the territory. Even in this day of the much-touted "adversary journalism," he believes too few reporters or journalistic institutions are willing to risk the pariah status that often goes with the questioning of conventional wisdom. "The overwhelming conclusion I have drawn from my life in journalism," he writes, "is that the American press, powerful as it unquestionably is, and protected though it may be by the Constitution and the laws, is not often 'robust and uninhibited' but is usually timid and anxious —for respectability at least as much as for profitability."

There is nothing timid about Wicker as he goes on re-examining his own, and society's, assumptions. He did it on Vietnam. He tells us here of a moment in Saigon in 1966—"one of the more important moments of my professional life"—when he understood that what U.S. advisers were telling reporters in official briefings was quite different from what they privately believed.

He did it on the CIA—as he came to realize that the ritual invocations of "national security" were more often designed to protect the reputations of the agency's officials than to safeguard genuine national interests.

He did it on crime and prisons—most notably in his book *A Time to Die* about his role in mediating the Attica

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bhersaf/Lebanon — Nairobi/Kenya — Bandung/Indonesia — Cairo/Egypt

Dharmsala/India (Tibetans)

An Invitation to Sponsor an Entire Village

Wouldn't you like to sponsor a real village filled with happy children? Perhaps in the highlands of Central America, the foothills of the Himalayas or the West African coast. . . ?

San Pedro Sula/Honduras — Esteli/Nicaragua — Freetown/Sierra Leone — Santiago/Chile

These are very special "Villages" where orphaned, abandoned, hungry, maltreated children find their very first real home where a "mother" cooks for them and is always there to love and care for them; where brothers and sisters remain together and live, laugh and learn together like a real family; where they stay until they are on their own after a solid education.

Since 1949 we have built 135 such SOS Children's Villages that today have touched the lives of more than 25,000 children in 60 countries.

We can never help all children. A terrible truth! But no excuse not to try at all. Rather a reason to try even harder! Already we have found thousands of friends around the world who feel as we do and help us share the burden.

Please join us and become the sponsor of a SOS Children's Village for just $10.- per month. Select 'your' SOS-Village from these nine. They need your help urgently.

Together we can do so much more to improve the lives of deserving children. After all, what better investment can we make in the peaceful future of our world?

PS: Oh yes, your sponsorship contribution is forwarded to 'your' Village *without deduction*. Administrative costs are borne by the international Hermann-Gmeiner-Fund, established for the promotion of SOS Children's Villages throughout the world.

YES, I would like to become a Village-Sponsor and have chosen the SOS Children's Village in _____.
Enclosed is my first contribution of $_____.
(Quarterly payments help our accounting tremendously.)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

As a SOS-Village-Sponsor, I will receive a personal certificate, the quarterly publication SOS-MESSENGER and an annual progress report of my Village.

I am sorry; I cannot sponsor a Village, but have enclosed my gift of $_____ *to benefit the SOS Children's Village in* _____.

Contributions are tax deductible. Sponsorship may be cancelled at any time. Please make check or money order payable to:

Friends of SOS Children's Villages, Inc.
424 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

prison rebellion, a book which I would rank with Norman Mailer's *Armies of the Night* as among the most moving and important pieces of personal journalism in the past decade.

Not everything Wicker has written in recent years has been so eloquent. I sense in his columns of late a certain weariness, endemic to the columnist required to grind out three 750-word screeds per week—week after week. Increasingly, he has devoted his most creative energies to books (he confesses here that he has always been "considerably more interested in books than in politics or public affairs").

On Press doesn't entirely work as a book. When judged by the high standard he set for himself in *A Time to Die*, it is rather pale stuff. But with Wicker one can be sure of one thing; he will continue to grow both as a writer and as a human being. I look forward eagerly to whatever comes next. □

Adventures in the Brain Trade

THE MIND STEALERS: Psychosurgery and Mind Control. *By Samuel Chavkin. Houghton Mifflin Co. 240 pp. $8.95.*

MIND CONTROL. *By Peter Schrag. Pantheon Books. 352 pp. $10.*

ANDREW SCULL

The therapeutic record of psychiatry is patchy at best. Periodically, however, a craze for some new treatment sweeps the field amidst chiliastic claims for its therapeutic efficacy. Among audiences not yet immune to such huckstering, claims of this sort arouse contradictory hopes and fears: hopes that the key to curing psychic disorders and distress has at last been discovered; and fears that the new treatment may permit the authoritarian manipulation of human behavior.

The fear that others may "steal" or "control" our minds, as Samuel Chavkin and Peter Schrag put it, is especially easily aroused over the issue of brain surgery for psychiatric and behavioral disorders. Psychosurgical techniques of one sort or another have now been in use for more than forty years, but they enjoyed their greatest popularity during the first decade and a half after their introduction. In the years following World War II, there was a considerable vogue for lobotomies. By some counts (no one bothered to keep accurate statistics) there were well over 50,000 such operations performed in this country alone. At the peak of the operation's popularity, its inventor, Egon Moniz, received the Nobel Prize for his contribution to medicine. Shortly thereafter, however, psychiatrists' love affair with the lobotomy began to fade. The fantasy that a brief, simple and cheap intervention would cure psychotics and permit the release of numbers of hospitalized patients dissolved in the face of accumulating evidence of discouraging, sometimes disastrous, outcomes: patients with severe intellectual deficits, emotional flattening and deterioration, and serious physical handicaps. While it was never entirely abandoned, the operation for the most part fell into disfavor.

In recent years, there has been a modest but noticeable upsurge in the use of brain surgery for the treatment of psychiatric and behavioral disorders. Both adults and children have enjoyed the dubious privilege of the psychosurgeons' attentions, and the conditions treated have ranged from schizophrenia to anorexia nervosa; from depression to hyperactivity; from phobias to obesity. There have even been a handful of experiments with psychosurgery on prisoners—and there would have been more but for the alertness and persistence of civil libertarians. Schrag and Chavkin point out that certain physicians, among them members of the Harvard Medical School faculty, have even claimed that ghetto riots and violent crime were the product of "brain dysfunction" and as such were "a public health problem"—claims which have found a sympathetic audience among some members of Congress.

One should note, of course, that in its current guise, the techniques of psychosurgery have become more "precise"—or at least more technically complex—since the days when Walter Freeman, the dean of American lobotomists, used to perform the operation on an outpatient basis, with the aid of an icepick. The neurosurgeons now operating on the frontal lobe, cyngulate gyrus, substantia innominata, thalamus, hypothalamus, and/or amygdala (each surgeon seems to have his favorite target or targets) now make use of fancy stereotaxic techniques to locate the site of the lesion, and employ a variety of sophisticated weapons—D.C. or radio frequency current, ultrasound, freezing, toxic chemicals, even radioactive "seeds"—to produce "safe, small" lesions. Yet, as Peter Schrag puts it, "the criteria with which [the operations] are evaluated—to say nothing of the candor of the reports themselves—are often as casual and brutal as ever."

Allegedly, the care taken over the size and location of the brain lesions reflects both a concern to avoid the undesirable side effects associated with earlier lobotomies and an increased knowledge as to which areas of the brain are implicated in the undesirable behavior. These contentions are spurious. The claims of accuracy and precision are almost entirely unsubstantiated and, given the complexity and individual variability of each brain, dubious in the extreme. The very notion of "targets" rests upon highly selective interpretations of experiments on animals, coupled with views about the relationships between brain and behavior which were discredited decades ago. In the words of Elliot Valenstein, author of what is still the best-balanced general treatment of psychosurgery*; "[there is] no theoretical way at present of predicting the consequences of destruction of any particular [brain] structure." And as for the claims of leading psychosurgeons to have the tools to control aggressive and predatory behavior, "It is almost impossible to eliminate these response patterns by any brain intervention short of those involving such extensive destructions of the brain that the subject is reduced to a 'vegetable status.'" The sophisticated technology is simply mystification, and the modern operations, in the words of one of the experts Samuel Chavkin interviewed, remain analogous to "taking a very delicate clock or watch and going at it with a chisel and hammer."

For all that, as both Chavkin and Schrag make clear, some zealous neurosurgeons continue to make the most extravagant claims for the value of their approach. Doctors Mark and Ervin assert a link between violence and "brain dysfunction related to focal lesions," and urge a mass screening program to detect candidates for their services. By their reckoning, there are 10 million Americans who "suffer from obvious brain disease" and an additional 5 million whose brains "have been subtly damaged." Jose Delgado, the Yale phys-

Andrew Scull teaches sociology at the University of Pennsylvania. He is the author of Decarceration (*Prentice-Hall*) *and the forthcoming* Museums of Madness (*Penguin Books*).

**Brain Control.* (John Wiley, 1973.)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"This revolution is about children"

RUNNING A MESSAGE PARLOR
A Librarian's Medium-rare Memior About Censorship
Gordon McShean

Here is what happens when a dedicated professional, trying to make his library relevant to today's needs, is confronted by self-appointed censors—Daughters of the American Revolution, John Birchers and religious fanatics.

Funny and serious at the same time, it gives insights into society's censoriousness. It also gives an inside look at librarians, forever putting to rest the stereotype of the timid, bespectacled introvert. The librarians here drink, swear and work hard at trying to be professionals.

237 pp., illust. 11.95

CRIME AND COVER-UP
The CIA, the Mafia and the Dallas-Watergate Connection
Peter Dale Scott

". . . a small masterpiece which renders understandable a Byzantine picture of internecine rivalries within government agencies and the intelligence apparatus, and the whole shabby interlinkage of conspiracy within conspiracies.

"Peter Dale Scott has emerged as the unchallenged expert on the political, underworld, and labor union interrelationships in the complex framework of the assasinations in Dallas and elsewhere." —Sylvia Meagher
Author of *Accesories After the Fact*

80 + xiii pp., notes, index (paper) 3.00

Nuclear Power: The Unviable Option
A Critical Look at Our Energy Alternatives
John J. Berger
Introduction by Linus Pauling

"I am highly enthusiastic about this book, . . . It is remarkable that Berger should have covered virtually every key point in reasonable depth and kept the book so readable and enjoyable.

From my own experiences, I know that a major task has been the recommendation of sources of information for citizens at all levels whose interest in the energy dilemma has been awakened. This book is ideal to fulfill this very important need."
—John W. Gofman, M.D., *Not Man Apart*

". . . briskly written . . . very readable . . . recommended . . ."
—*Library Journal*

"This is an excellent book, easy to read and informative."
—Hiram Bleeker, *AAAS*

384 pp., illust., notes, index 14.00 (c) 4.50 (p)

CHILDREN OF CHE
Childcare and Education in Cuba
Karen Wald

"I was deeply impressed with what I saw in Cuba. Their educational system was very interesting and has produced eager and enthusiastic young people. Our ability to meet with government leaders, students and people on the street gave us a totally different picture of Cuba than the one conveyed in the popular press.

"I wish every American could investigate Cuba's bold experiment in education first-hand. At very least, we can begin that essential investigation by reading Karen Wald's *Children of Che.* It's a must not only for those who are curious about Cuba, but for anyone who cares about the future of education in today's world."
—Congressman Ronald V. Dellums (D-Cal)

[Congressman Dellums visited Cuba in 1977 as part of a delegation which included prominent American educators.]

"This book—written with obvious affection and admiration for the people who appear in its pages—is useful for anyone trying to understand the culture of the new Cuba. You learn about it from the author, and from the children she writes about, who tell a story of particular relevance to us in this country, where schools have failed so many children."
—Elizabeth Farnsworth

[Ms. Farnsworth is Latin America editor for *Internews*, the West Coast news service and a panelist on the PBS program, "World Press."]

399 pp., 66 photos, index 14.00 (c) 4.95 (p)

Ramparts Press

Box 10128N, Palo Alto, California 94303

Please send me these book(s), postpaid:

☐ *Children of Che* ☐ *Running a Message Parlor*
☐ *Crime and Cover-up* ☐ *Nuclear Power*

Enclosed is $_____(add .50 postage)*

Name_____

Address_____

City_____State_____Zip_____

*California residents add 6% sales tax.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

iologist most famous for a public relations stunt—stopping a charging bull by radio control via electrodes implanted in its brain—speaks of using such implants in man to create a "psycho-civilized society." And Dr. Hunter Brown, a Californian who is currently the most active psychosurgeon in the country, offers us the enticing vision of a "solution" to the crime problem. If only we can overcome the sinister efforts to suppress "scientific truth," we are in a position virtually to eliminate crime by lopping off some brain cells in the perpetrators. Moreover, while "each violent criminal incarcerated for twenty years to life costs taxpayers perhaps $100,000 . . . , for roughly $6,000, society can provide medical treatment which will transform him into a responsible, well-adjusted citizen."

It is with such figures, events, and claims that Samuel Chavkin's *The Mind Stealers* is concerned. Though there is some brief attention to the early experiences with lobotomies, and some odd glancing references to the activities of eugenicists, sociobiologists, and their kind, the book mainly attempts to provide a critical overview of the brave new world envisioned by the psychosurgeons. Chavkin ranges widely over a field rich with anecdotes, horror stories, and crackpot theories. We are treated, for example, to a discussion of the activities of Dr. Orlando J. Andy, a neurosurgeon at the University of Mississippi. (Andy specializes in operations on hyperactive children, whom he sees as victims of their "structurally abnormal brain tissue.") We learn of recent attempts to use prisoners as guinea pigs in psychosurgical experiments, and to subject them to "milder" forms of aversive therapy such as those involving Anectine, a terror drug which induces temporary respiratory arrest while leaving the subject fully conscious. And we encounter "mad scientists" who propose the electronic surveillance and modification of released criminals' brain waves through brain-implanted "stimoreceivers" which are in constant two-way communication with a central computer.

On a less sensational level, Chavkin provides a useful account of how the National Commission for the Protection [*sic*!] of Human Subjects came to recommend that psychosurgery be a permissible procedure to employ on prisoners, institutionalized mental patients, and even emotionally ill children. As he points out, the commission's guidelines contrast sharply with the thrust of the testimony gathered in its public hearings. Moreover, they undermine recent judicial attempts to protect institutionalized populations from psychosurgeons, on the ground that the "involuntarily detained . . . cannot give informed and adequate consent to experimental psychosurgical procedures on the brain."

But Chavkin's book has a number of defects. The tone is shrill, the writing frequently clumsy, and his treatment of many of the subjects on which he touches is distressingly glib and superficial. To ask, for example, whether "the wish to change society is reason enough for our young people to be subjected to these brain retread operations" is to sacrifice reasoned criticism for rhetorical effect.

When Chavkin turns to the critical question of the efficacy of psychosurgery, he exhibits a fundamental ambiguity: on the one hand, he wants to stigmatize psychosurgery as a useless, savage, and inhuman procedure; and on the other, to claim that it has frightening potential for the control of nonconformity. One can scare people by alleging that "the behavioral specialists now offer technological weaponry to intrude into the individual's innermost thinking processes"; and by invoking the specter of techniques leading to "mass mind control and compliance." But the fact of the matter is that the weaponry does not exist and the techniques do not work. And raising such red herrings serves only to obscure the real issues in this area.

Peter Schrag's new book, *Mind Control*, is a much more impressive piece of work. In many ways, it can be seen as an expansion of his earlier work with Diane Divoky on children allegedly afflicted with "minimal brain damage or dysfunction." Indeed, many of the themes and arguments first introduced in *The Myth of the Hyperactive Child* carry over into this new book. Here, however, they are placed in the much broader context of the post-World War II boom in the mad business. As he points out, the mental health sector is now a $15 billion-a-year industry, employing upward of half a million people and "treating" anywhere from 7 million to 40 million people a year.

Its spectacular growth has been fueled by massive government funding and, according to the conventional medical wisdom, by the advent of a whole series of "wonder drugs": Thorazine, Stelazine, Elavil, Lithium Carbonate, and so forth. The new psychoactive drugs, Schrag notes, are prescribed on an enormous scale and with extraordinary recklessness, primarily as a means of pacification and control. The pacification is bought at a heavy price, for the drugs have a wide range of serious side effects. These range from loss of affect and attention, to such apparently irreversible syndromes as tardive dyskinesia, a highly stigmatizing condition characterized by involuntary movements of the facial muscles, lips, and tongue. (In such cases, physicians frequently resort to the prescription of other drugs to suppress the iatrogenic symptoms, at the risk of yet further side effects.)

Meanwhile, to overcome the problem of "drug defectors"—those who refuse to take their drugs—the manufacturers have developed "depot drugs," long-acting chemicals which need only be injected at infrequent intervals; and tasteless, odorless liquid versions which can be conveniently slipped into the patient's food—a practice which, as Schrag wryly comments, must do wondrous things for those with paranoid delusions. In such a context, electroshock "therapy" and psychosurgery can be seen as only a more extreme point on the same continuum—the "ultimate weapons," in Schrag's terms, of the proponents of the therapeutic state.

Schrag's discussion of psychoactive drugs provides a valuable corrective to the drug companies' Panglossian portrait of their therapeutic action and impact; and to the rhetoric of those psychiatrists who have greeted them as a long-sought panacea. There is much to admire, too, in his examination of other forms of "therapeutic" intervention. Though his survey of the depredations of the psychosurgeons is much briefer than Chavkin's, it is also more coherent and cogent. Schrag sees, and makes sure that we see, the fraudulence of the psychosurgeons' claims. Despite their siren songs, "There is in fact no brave new world of precise brain control—not yet and not in the foreseeable future. The brain is simply too complex and the techniques too crude."

In the final analysis, however, Schrag rightly argues that to concentrate upon attacking psychoactive drugs or psychosurgery because of their unfortunate side effects or their lack of efficacy is to mistake the central issue. Such criticisms suggest that if the side effects could be eliminated, and if the techniques became more refined and powerful, they would then be acceptable. But the more "humane" and effective the technology, the easier intervention becomes, and the more attractive:

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> It is a subtle, seductive process, a process of mystification, which teaches every individual that his mind and behavior are subject to chemical or other organic processes not fully within his control; that there are professionals who frequently know more about him than he knows himself and who can better understand his real interests; that it is normal to be watched, tested, and questioned by the agents of social service; and that many of the problems growing out of poverty, inferior schools, poor housing, or simply out of the everyday conditions of human existence are really medical ailments subject to manipulation. Most significantly, it teaches that institutional demands and arbitrary social standards are themselves part of the natural order. It is no longer the cop or the schoolmaster telling the individual what to do; it is science. The individual is no longer being punished; he is being treated.

Therapy is the narcotics of politics. The more control comes to be legitimized in terms of diagnosis and treatment, rather than rules, responsibility, and punishment, the more difficult it becomes to resist its intrusions into the emotions, thought, and behavior of the individual; and the more readily control is directed at generalized behavioral "problems" rather than specific acts. The threat thus exists of a massive extension of official intervention into the lives of millions who had previously escaped notice or attention—all under the guise of programs designed to "help" them. It is not the least of ironies that the best protections against such an eventuality may well be the side effects and imprecision of existing techniques of intervention!

Mind Control is marred somewhat by unnecessary repetitions and redundancies. Occasionally, too, Schrag is inclined to overstate his case, to opt for the bold, sweeping statement rather than to admit to the qualified reality. But these are minor flaws in what is unquestionably a powerful and thoughtful indictment of current trends toward a therapeutic state. It deserves to be widely read. □

Tom Mix Was a Softie

BIG BAD WOLVES: Masculinity in the American Film. *By Joan Mellen. Pantheon Books. 345 pp. $12.95.*

MARK CRISPIN MILLER

"This book," writes Joan Mellen, "is about the fabrication in American films of a male superior to women, defiant, assertive, and utterly fearless." However, Hollywood's "fabrication" is nothing compared to Mellen's, which would assess "the damage done to males who cannot live up to destructive and impossible ideals" invented by a warped, reactionary film industry. "Hollywood," supposedly a single-minded entity, is the baddest wolf of all, having spent its years dictating a ruinous misconception of masculinity: "Repeatedly through the decades, Hollywood has demanded that we admire and imitate males who dominate others," begins *Big Bad Wolves*, which proceeds to huff and puff around the same point for well over 300 pages.

What we have here is a failure to discriminate. Something like a feminist critical method has been hastily applied to something like a survey of American film. As film criticism and feminist interpretation are both relatively young, it is still easy for their would-be exponents to feign great expertise without much work. Because such pretense does disservice to film and feminism alike, it demands meticulous inspection. *Big Bad Wolves* offers the reader a bewildering mass of fallacies. It will take some space to do them justice.

Mellen promotes the conspiracy theory of popular culture, insisting that movies dictate attitudes dreamt up by evil tycoons. According to this notion, Hollywood does not reflect widespread feelings but manufactures concepts for consumption by the ignorant, who then suffer. Rather than seek to determine the cultural foundation of extant preconceptions, Mellen looks for somebody to blame them on. Although she occasionally claims in passing that Hollywood plays upon its audience's prejudices, the guiding assumption of *Big Bad Wolves* is that Hollywood simply invented "the stereotype of the self-controlled, invulnerable, stoical hero" out of thin air, to suit its own dastardly purposes.

Aside from representing sexism as a very simple matter, this argument depends upon a vast distortion of film history. Mellen contrives a case for the movies' "cruel and impossible demand that real-life men live up to a super-*macho* image or fail" by misconstruing plots, quoting actors out of context and generally throwing logic to the winds. Crucial details of *Shane, The Wild Bunch, Dog Day Afternoon* and other films are altered or neglected. We are told that Sam Peckinpah would find it "repellent . . . that a society could exist where the rape of a woman by a man would be unthinkable." Peckinpah may have his problems, but this is not one of them. In *Ride the High Country, Straw Dogs, Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia* and *Cross of Iron*, those who force themselves on women are the most depraved and vicious characters. "Actors," we learn, "refuse roles which allow even a hint of male vulnerability": Clark Gable "refused to affect a Southern accent for *Gone with the Wind* because he considered it effeminate," and Robert Redford "brings to the screen the same sensibility," since he "insisted on changes for the scene in which he . . . fails to make love successfully" to Barbra Streisand in *The Way We Were*. Mellen merely infers such motivation to prove a dubious thesis. According to George Cukor, Gable "did not have a great deal of confidence in himself as an actor," and so his refusal to drawl did not necessarily reflect a belief that Southerners are fruity. And the insinuation about Redford is more unfair, since he played a homosexual in *Inside Daisy Clover*, and even wanted to make his characterization more explicit than the powers at Warner Brothers would allow.

Big Bad Wolves is full of such mistaken inferences. The mainstay of Mellen's survey, however, is simple ignorance. "The Depression male hero" was "fiercely competitive, domineering, and stridently aggressive," "undeterred by sentimentality for those who falter in a harsh world," and so on. Like Fredric March in *Les Misérables* (1935)? Like those heroes played throughout the 1930s by Robert Donat? Ronald Colman? Melvyn Douglas? Robert Montgomery? "The Depression led to a plethora of films which insisted that only total freedom from women . . . permits a man to be truly masculine." What about William Powell and Myrna Loy in *The Thin Man* series (1934-47)? Cary Grant and Katharine Hepburn in *Bringing Up Baby* (1938)? Grant and Irene Dunne in *The Awful Truth* (1937)? James Stewart and Simone Si-

Mark Miller has written for The New York Review of Books, Georgia Review *and* Film Quarterly. *He teaches in the English department at the University of Pennsylvania.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mon in *Seventh Heaven* (1937)? Walter Huston and Mary Astor in *Dodsworth* (1936)? Laurence Olivier and Merle Oberon in *Wuthering Heights* (1939)? If the "Depression male hero" was such a gorilla, why were Leslie Howard, Herbert Marshall and Freddie Bartholomew popular in the 1930s?

By ignoring many films and misreading a few, Mellen implies that King Kong could have played nearly every leading role in Hollywood's history, and then some: "The popular arts have been single-minded in their repeated demand that males in America conform to a cave-man model of masculinity," an indictment that obviously includes television. Does *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* make such a "demand"? *All in the Family*? *Lou Grant*? *The Odd Couple*? *The Honeymooners*? "The popular arts" have been no more "single-minded" than the movies, which have offered a variety of masculine types. Glenn Ford, Burt Lancaster and Henry Fonda, for instance, have often played weak or gentle heroes or, more to the point, characters too complex for vulgar classification.

In fact, the brutal, threatening male who abuses his authority has usually been the bad guy, not a "model": Edward G. Robinson in *The Sea Wolf*, Laird Cregar in *I Wake Up Screaming*, Orson Welles in *Touch of Evil* and Robert Mitchum in *Night of the Hunter* and *Cape Fear* offer a few examples. The frequent adaptation of the Jekyll and Hyde story provides further disproof of Mellen's generalization, which also fails to apply to those characters whose heroism involves some kind of martyrdom, like Leslie Howard in *The Petrified Forest*, Kirk Douglas in *Spartacus* and *Lonely Are the Brave*, Alan Ladd in *Shane*, and Marlon Brando (a sucker for punishment) in *Viva Zapata!*, *The Fugitive Kind* and *Mutiny on the Bounty*. There was considerable diversity among Hollywood's heroes until the late 1960s, when the cruel, cold-blooded protector with a phallic firearm suddenly became popular. (This type is already disappearing, as Clint Eastwood softens his image and women reappear in major roles, and so Mellen's diatribe is already out of date.)

The movies have also conveyed many different kinds of sexism. A good feminist survey of American film would discriminate among them, as Molly Haskell does so well in *From Reverence to Rape*. Tracking down Neanderthals, Mellen overemphasizes hulking cruelty: "At worst, the male in American movies has brutalized women, his violence incomplete unless it is reflected in his sexuality." Not many heroes have done so. The kind of sexism reflected in movies is, by and large, characterized not by brutality but by protective condescension, which has manifested itself as amused contempt, unamused contempt, simple neglect or, paradoxically, chivalrous exaltation. These attitudes are far more damaging than any amount of physical bullying, for they work subtly, sometimes appealingly, undermining self-respect. Mellen ignores the most corrosive kind of sexism in favor of the most violent, and so evades the whole issue.

Moreover, by attributing the rise of "misogyny" to a certain kind of film hero, she underestimates the extent to which sexism inheres in our culture. The causes of sexism are old and complex, most of them predating the development of cinema. In order to examine modern conceptions of masculinity with any success, it would be wise to study certain aspects of American culture. A careful perusal of 19th-century popular fiction might illuminate the assumptions of De Mille, Griffith, Hawks or Huston, whose preconceptions did not originate in this century. Unfortunately, Mellen has not bothered to consider anything other than a few films, and so can claim, for instance, that the villains in *The Great Train Robbery* (1903) "are clad in black shirts, the association of blackness and evil being conscious and soon to become standard," a revelation to anyone familiar with, say, *Paradise Lost* or the Bible, not to mention anyone who's afraid of the dark.

This unawareness of texts is detrimental in other ways. The film *All Quiet on the Western Front*, "surely an anomaly for 1930," was so unfashionably pacifist that its action "had to be transported to a foreign country, and [Lewis] Milestone chose a German setting, just as Dorothy Arzner, in her 1933 film *Christopher Strong*, had to exile her liberated heroine . . . by making her an English aristocrat." Mellen's point is that American society was too militaristic and too sexist to accept such stories in American settings. But *All Quiet on the Western Front* was surely not "an anomaly for 1930," since two other anti-war films, *Journey's End* and *The Case of Sergeant Grischa*, were released the same year. And, more importantly, that film's action is set in Germany because Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* is about Germans, just as Gilbert Frankau's *Christopher Strong* is about English people. Thus ignorant of texts that bear direct relevance to her discussion, Mellen is obviously not equipped to interpret much of American culture, a task demanding an acquaintance with many books, even some that were never made into movies.

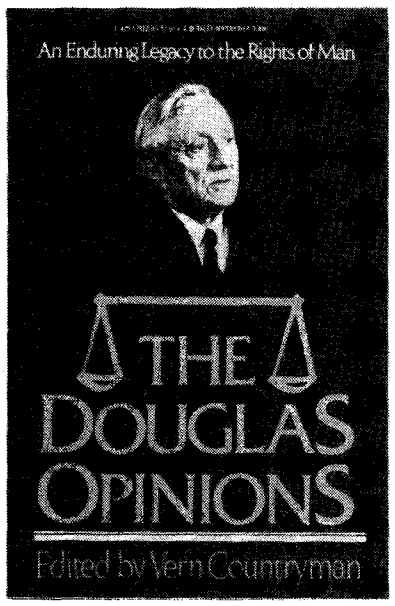
Lacking time for the requisite reading, Mellen might at least have asked herself just what "masculinity" means. Not once in *Big Bad Wolves* is this term subjected to scrutiny, although it is used to signify, among other things, attractiveness, moral stature, energy, dissidence and sensuality. In *Paths of Glory*, for instance, masculinity is "the recognition that all rational men are ambivalent about danger and are subject to terror." Just why this should have anything to do with gender is a question that strikes at the heart of Mellen's book. Left undefined, the book's subject constantly slides out of focus: *Detective Story* "presented maleness in terms of action derived from felt emotion," whereas Brando's "raw masculinity" sometimes "prevented the tender aspects of his personality from surfacing."

Mellen may not know much about masculinity, but she knows what she likes. "The self-controlled, invulnerable, stoical hero" acts out of "false" masculinity, while the man who is "in touch with his feelings" or "in touch with himself" is one whose masculinity is "honest." By "in touch with his feelings" Mellen seems to mean "highly emotional," if not "wet." She likes characters who cry a lot. John Barrymore, who offered "a large and unrestricted definition of masculinity," has "huge tears escaping from his eyes" in the middle of *Tempest*, and, toward the end, "large tears flow from his eyes." (Evidently, men out of touch with themselves have their tear ducts somewhere else.) Tom Mix, celebrated for "the ease with which [his films] approached the whole question of masculinity," is described "crying unashamedly and profusely" in *Dick Turpin*. James Dean, "in touch with himself," "sobs from the depths of his being" in *East of Eden*, and Paul Newman, "in touch with his feelings," "gives himself uninhibitedly to tears" in *The Left-Handed Gun*. Dustin Hoffman goes them all one better. In *Midnight Cowboy*, he "wets his pants." "When in the entire history of American film has a principal male character done such a thing?" Mellen exults. Presumably, a masculine man is one who leaks.

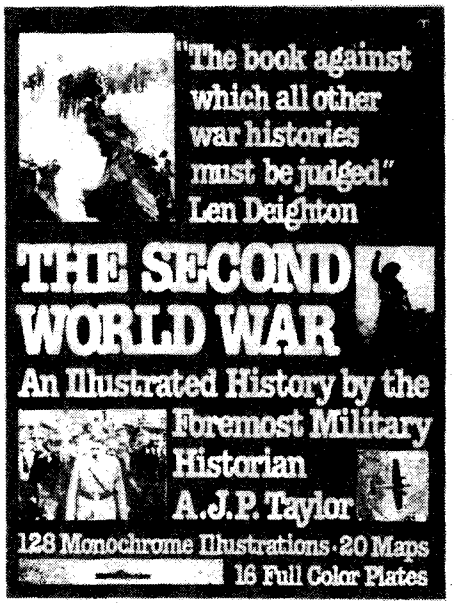
Phrases like "in touch with his feelings," although meaningless, place this book in the last decade, as do the epithets "Fascist" and "reactionary," which Mellen throws around with mad abandon. Such rhetoric recalls a few

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

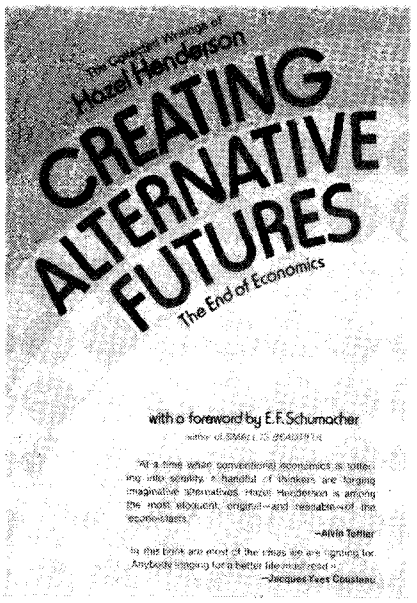
Reflections on America...past and present



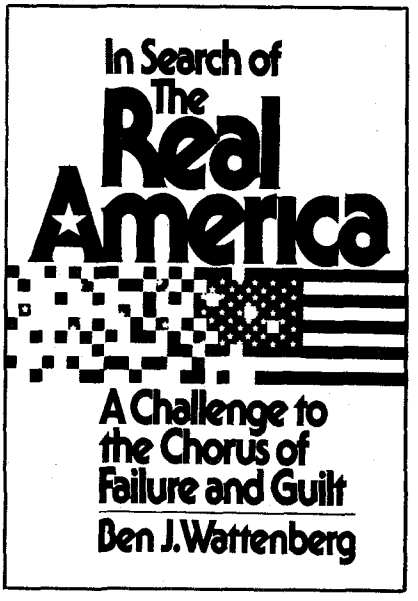
A forthright collection of Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas' most important decisions on such crucial issues as the right to vote, wiretapping, censorship, obscenity and discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities.
$7.95 *Coming in July*


"The book against which all other war histories must be judged." Len Deighton
THE SECOND WORLD WAR
An Illustrated History by the Foremost Military Historian A.J.P. Taylor
128 Monochrome Illustrations · 20 Maps
16 Full Color Plates

A leading military historian presents a brilliantly unified account of the most destructive and far-flung war the world has ever known. In a cohesive, objective narrative, A.J.P. Taylor explains *What* happened, *How* it happened and *Why.* Includes 16 full color illustrations, 128 photographs and 20 maps.
$7.95 *Coming in July*



A forceful critique of mass-consumption, industrial societies, their dominant corporations and bureaucracies and their traditional economic concepts, written by one of the most original economic and social thinkers of the day.
$4.95 *Available now*



A noted social critic and author of THE REAL MAJORITY focuses on the crucial issues of all Americans in an attempt to separate social fact from social fiction and counter "the American lust to poormouth America."
$3.95 *Available now*

From Berkley Books **Available at your local bookstore.**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sorry aspects of the 1960s: fierce indignation and a cozy faith in mere emotion. The vision of the film industry informing *Big Bad Wolves* also recalls '60s' rhetoric, suggesting that the pigs are alive and well and grunting in Los Angeles, oppressing "the people," or the sensitive filmgoers, represented by Joan Mellen. This gentle audience, we learn, abhorred with equal fervor the war in Vietnam, straight society and the films on the Mellen blacklist: the James Bond films appealed "to young men involved neither in the counterculture nor anti-war activity," and Clint Eastwood's fans were "young men in the sixties who remained unaffected by any of the protest movements," and also "the disenchanted student young," although "not perhaps the more conscious." "To many at the time [i.e., J. Mellen and friends], newly introduced to the . . . works of Antonioni, Truffaut, Bergman, Buñuel and Fellini which many felt were the only films worth seeing, Bond was grotesque, a cartoon parody of maleness." So, Mellen's taste in films is the expression of a keen political sense which matured in the '60s, while thugs and rednecks and a few dimwitted activists slavered their way through viewings of *Dr. No.*

As its main purpose is the advertisement of Joan Mellen's pristine vision, *Big Bad Wolves,* like most doctrinaire works, is appallingly humorless. *Some Like It Hot* "seems daring" with its male stars "prancing through the film in drag," but "the disguise is so obvious that their masculinity is never in question." "The ideal" male in *Pillow Talk* "is the fabricated [Rock] Hudson, a bionic, plastic toy no less than his contemporary Sean Connery as James Bond, that mini-Hugh Hefner [*sic*]." *Shampoo* "was made solely as a narcissist exercise for Warren Beatty as the white Shaft, a superstud," which pose "finally appears to be a mask for distaste for women."

These incredible misreadings of some very clever films betray a profound impatience with all conflict. Without conflict there are no laughs. Tearful men with weak bladders make poor comic heroes, but then Mellen is not interested in humor. Thus liberated, she fails to see that without a belief in the fruitful conflict of the sexes, a belief that men and women are different but equal, we could not enjoy Shakespearean comedy, or *The Way of the World,* or *Pride and Prejudice,* or *Private Lives,* or *The Thin Man,* or *Pat and Mike,* or any other satisfying story of sexual rivalry.

Both the responsible feminist and the astute critic would attempt to keep certain realities in mind. Many of the phenomena which Mellen considers "sexist" have an actual basis in what most of us call "real life." In search of masculinity, she devotes her attention to Westerns, crime dramas and war stories, which generally exclude women, since most gangsters, cowpokes and soldiers have not been female, a fact of history and not a sexist fiction. Nevertheless, Mellen notes with disapproval that the exclusively male world of *Dawn Patrol* (1930), set at the German front during World War I, is exclusively male: "There is not a single woman in the film." Mellen also detects in "the masculine ethos" of the gangster film "sadism toward women, their fixed role as slave-like possessions, and the eroticism of violent sexuality," things which are also noticeable among real gangsters, who have never been much given to feminism. This is not Hollywood's fault, even if some films have glamorized criminals.

Mellen's intolerance becomes clearest when she dismisses the very personalities of real people as "images" attributable to the rise of film. "Dustin Hoffman and Robert Redford in *All the President's Men*" are "unburdened by family life," and so can "delve into the mysteries of Watergate free of all those family responsibilities, mortgages, dental bills, school fees and summer-camp selections which tie down nominally less masculine men." We are reminded that "John Wayne often played such a male." Since Woodward and Bernstein happened to be single and childless as they devoted themselves to "the mysteries of Watergate," this objection to a film based closely on their lives seems rather strange. Maybe there should have been a scene in which Redford sends Hoffman off to summer camp. As "freedom from domestic commitments" is a feature of Hollywood's "false" masculinity, so is "the guise of silence," and therefore Gary "Cooper's silence derived from a rationale expressed by [William S.] Hart in his autobiography." Those who knew Cooper, an ex-cowboy, claim that he just happened to be a quiet person, but then they lack the benefit of Mellen's wide reading. "To grant their roles authenticity, actors personally become caricatures of their screen personae. 'It's just that I don't like to talk much,' Charles Bronson has said." If Bronson was telling the truth, his straightforward remark does not corroborate Mellen's argument, but disproves it.

Mellen spends many pages laboriously deriding the propagandistic war films of the '40s (*Back to Bataan* [1945] contains "no criticism of America's colonial role in Asia"), but only because they aren't her kind of propaganda. A film, as she sees it, has a "thesis" or a "moral," "insisting" this or "saying" that. She would have films "say" the things she likes to hear, regardless of how improbable; she does not want art but sociology, which would faithfully reflect the conditions of life as she imagines them.

"*The Graduate,* cowardly and hypocritical at its root, fails to allow Benjamin the intelligence or imagination to define his discontent or articulate how he perceives the society he rejects, let alone how he would alter it." In other words, *The Graduate* should not present an inarticulate, apolitical young man briefly confused about his life but a bold rebel, in touch with his feelings. Since Dustin Hoffman played the part, there was a great opportunity missed: Benjamin could have delivered a ringing indictment of capitalism, and then wet his pants. But there are other problems: Benjamin "finds that lovemaking with an aggressive woman who likes sex holds no pleasure for the male," "a device used to keep women in their old inferior social place." Another generalization. Mrs. Robinson's self-hate and contempt for Benjamin apparently have nothing to do with the unhappiness of that affair (which never permits us to conclude that Mrs. Robinson "likes sex"). Mellen would have Benjamin looking for Ms. Goodbar, and finding her.

It is true that we are manipulated by what we watch. The commercials that pervade daily life influence us incessantly; the countless subtle messages of billboards, magazine ads and television screens, more difficult to notice or resist than the propagandism of movies, distort our values as they determine how we spend our money. This manipulation involves much more than the presentation of a manly stereotype: It is dangerous precisely because it is so complex, and it will not fail until we learn how to perceive it, and how to perceive our own preconceptions making it possible.

And as far as movies are concerned, we cannot sensibly assess their political intentions or effects until a number of hard questions have been answered. Who is responsible for the content of a film, or the public personality of a star? The answers will vary from era to era, studio to studio, movie to movie. Mellen usually refers to films as the personal expressions of their directors, and tends to describe an actor as if his screen persona were all his own creation. She

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mentions "Mervyn Le Roy's *Little Caesar*," and claims that "What is truly male, De Mille tells us [in *Male and Female*], transcends social class or wealth." *Little Caesar* was also the work of producers Darryl Zanuck and Hal Wallis, and screenwriter Francis Faragoh, and is very faithful to W.R. Burnett's best-selling novel. What "De Mille tells us" in *Male and Female* comes directly from J.M. Barrie's *The Admirable Crichton*, on which it is based. It is therefore misleading to ascribe these movies' "statements" (if any) to their directors. "Unlike Hart, [Tom Mix] would never play a gangster or an outlaw, nor would he kill his enemies." Mix was easygoing in his films only because the mogul William Fox fashioned his image with great care, figuring that the time was right for a cheerful cowboy.

How did Fox know that his star would succeed? Does Hollywood invent public needs, or exploit them? It is not likely that the film industry would have remained solvent unless its product appealed to its audience. Does the presentation of a character imply endorsement of his behavior? Mellen insists that "we must approve the viciousness of the gangster [in *Little Caesar*] because . . . it is both successful and an acceptable route to survival." Those who have seen the film may decide for themselves if this makes any sense. Finally, has Hollywood been forcing a single masculine stereotype on the American public for more than seventy years? No. Nearly every chapter in this book brings to mind dozens of counter-examples. As propaganda, it can only convince those who already agree with it. *Big Bad Wolves* is for people who have been too busy nursing prejudices to spend much time at the movies. □

She Lost It at the Movies

PERDIDO. *By Jill Robinson. Alfred A. Knopf. 448 pp. $9.95.*

NANCY LYNN SCHWARTZ

"Hollywood is both a small town and a magical kingdom," remarks an actor in Jill Robinson's novel *Perdido*. And it is precisely this tension, this contradiction between daily life and larger than life, which makes this Hollywood novel so interesting. It is hardly the steamy fan-mag *roman-à-clef* or the explicit memoir one might expect from the daughter of a one-time studio chief. Rather, it's part *Our Town* and part epic, with Hollywood as the backdrop for an often haunting story of a young woman's search for her father.

The heroine is Susanna Howard, granddaughter of one of movieland's founding fathers, who lives with her extended, dynastic family in one of those mansions Hollywood's immigrant pioneers built, a sprawling American Versailles called "Perdido." Susanna's small adolescent obsessions are magnified against the opulent background of movieland aristocracy. Family squabbles assume the proportions of royal intrigue. Growing up as Hollywood royalty (a rite explored by Robinson's childhood chum Brooke Hayward in *Haywire*) is not unlike living in a movie: chauffeurs to pick you up at school; movie stars under the Christmas tree; children's birthday parties which are more a matter of politics than popularity.

This Fabergé egg hatches strange chicks cut off from any world or frame of reference other than the movies. And such a milieu distorts emotional reality because displays of affection are more frequently based on power than on love or friendship. In Hollywood, the family must stick together with more than normal ferocity because only blood is thicker than box office, and a world can be lost overnight.

One day Jackson Lane, a golden screen idol, arrives at Perdido and Susanna spends the day with him. She develops an obsessive, schoolgirl crush on Lane which suddenly twists in epic, incestuous fashion when she discovers what everyone else has always known—the handsome knight is her illegitimate father. Susanna takes off in search of him and in search of herself, like Telemachus playing Candide.

The juxtaposition of Robinson's portrait of family life in Hollywood against Susanna's search is a provocative reminder that tinseltown has always been a watershed for orphans. Strays aggregate here, and are transformed, renamed, and apotheosized into symbols. Heritage is the concoction of a press release. And just as the image of the stars has been manufactured, so has the myth of the happy family been synthesized. "I think

Nancy Lynn Schwartz is a screenwriter whose recent credits include Wheels *for NBC and* Like Mother Like Me. *She is at work on a book about writers in Hollywood to be published by Knopf.*

℞

For the Fabulous Invalid

PERFORMING ARTS REVIEW

THE JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT & LAW OF THE ARTS

RECENT FEATURES

Danish Film & Broadcasting

The Mark Rothko Opinion: Paintings
Surrogate Judge Millard Midonick

Common Law Protection of Choreographic Works

Record Piracy:
The New York State Hearings

Bosley Crowther (Former film critic, N.Y. Times) said:

"I have found your publication . . . most knowledgeable, thorough and broadminded in covering the heretofore neglected areas of the management, legal and corporate structural aspects of the performing arts industries. I do recommend it to anyone interested in these fields, and as good collateral reading for those who are concerned about the continuation of the arts."

Don't you know someone who need a subscription to this journal? A one-year subscription costs only $32.00 for the next four issues, and you can save subscription dollars by taking advantage of our retroactive seven year rate, at $180.00.

Order Today
PERFORMING ARTS REVIEW

Law-Arts Publishers, Inc.
453 Greenwich Street
New York, N.Y. 10013

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

my grandfather . . . and the rest of them invented the happy American family and put it into movies to drive everyone crazy," muses Susanna. "It's sort of as real as a musical number about falling in love." Susanna reaffirms the fact that the yearning for parental love is an appetite immune to privilege. Every little girl wants her daddy, and the primacy of this need ultimately cancels out everything but its own urgency.

The best thing about Robinson's depiction of family life in a patriarchal kingdom is her illumination of the women in Hollywood: mothers, wives and daughters of actors, directors, producers, writers. The book conveys a perceptive vision of this distaff network of life-supporting appendages and indicates that the women are, for myriad reasons, the survivors, defying the beauty ethic that would seemingly make them this town's first casualties.

The epic, rather tragic flavor of *Perdido* is heightened by the fact that the story begins at the end of an era. The pioneer immigrants have mostly died out. Television and the cold war are laying siege to the kingdom in a slow war of attrition, breaking down the walls that can no longer isolate Hollywood from the rest of the world. Perdido, loss, lost. The family must leave the manse, friends and loved ones scatter . . . it will never be the same. Susanna is part of the younger generation clinging together in an attempt to keep the memory alive. She and the childhood friend she marries are like ruined Confederates, dreaming of their lost Taras and the vanquished South, cursing the taste of the vanished silver spoon as much as they cherish its memory.

Perdido is overflowing with fascinating observations, but for all its richness it's a frustrating, often disappointing work. The witty, acute statements about Hollywood are made in passing but not pursued. So much that's good in this book is on the periphery, indirectly illuminated or glimpsed momentarily, but where the center should hold it fumbles.

The biggest problem, unfortunately, is that Susanna, the poor little princess, doesn't sustain the book. Robinson has attempted, for most of the book, to use one of the most difficult narrative voices —a precocious child speaking in the first-person present. Sometimes it works, sometimes not, and when it fails it's like an American primitive portrait of a child with a freakishly adult face. I am an ardent admirer of Robinson's autobiographical *Bed/Time/Story*, a beautifully written book which forces the reader to care about the characters and their fate. It seems almost as if Robinson retreated after such a cathartic, confessional work, but in distancing herself from her characters she has drawn back too far. The result is that apart from two or three characters who come vitally to life only to be snatched away too quickly, most of the characters in *Perdido* are curiously lacking dimension. In that way, *Perdido* is an impressive attempt to build a mansion which comes out resembling a movie set. It's a glorious, almost believable façade, but you couldn't live there. □

A Map for Misreading

THE WHITE MAN'S INDIAN: Images of the Indian from Columbus to the Present. *By Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr. Alfred A. Knopf. 197 pp. $15.*

FREDERICK TURNER

Robert F. Berkhofer's new book is further testimony that one way or another the Indian is still very much with us. His particular contribution to our understanding of Indian/white relations is to present the "implications of the ideas and imagery used by whites to understand the peoples they call Indians." He cautions that he does not attempt to explain the derivations of these ideas and images nor their strange persistence over time. Rather he wants to give us a kind of survey map of these images and their uses, 1492 to the present. Such a survey shows that the natives were early reduced to a monolith, The Indian, who wears one of two masks, depending on his current behavior and proximity to white observers: the Good Indian, or Noble Savage; or the Bad Injun, or plain savage.

The Good Indian or Noble Savage image had little currency during the exploration and conquest of the Americas; its usage was confined to those far removed from the moving frontier where the issues of savagism and civilization were joined and where Indians were "real." Today in such places as the Dakotas, Montana and Wyoming the image of the Indian remains largely untouched by this idealized creation, and no doubt there are those in the East who had once harbored it but are now having second thoughts with Indian land claim suits on the dockets in Maine, Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

Like other images of the Indian, the idea of the noble savage long antedated the finding of the New World, as both A.O. Lovejoy and George Boas showed years ago. Berkhofer details its use in critiques of civilization, as a motif in the arts, and in real estate advertisements for the New World. Wearing this mask the Indian is somber, wise, divorced from his tribe, and above all helpful to whites and sympathetic to their plans to civilize the wilderness. He (almost always it is "he") is also doomed, and therein lies the bathos so necessary to his fictive life.

The Bad Injun or plain savage is an image we know too well: treacherous, cruel, a rapist and child-killer, he is above all unreconstructed. This is the Indian who brutishly opposed the advance of white civilization and so justly forfeited his life and lands. The Indian has been forced to wear this mask in the service of imperialism, academic and institutional racism, and government programs designed to settle with him once and for all.

As Berkhofer convincingly demonstrates, these images have not really altered from Columbus's time to the present; his frequent and lengthy quotations from such commentators as the 16th-century Spanish theologian, Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, Count Buffon, the Scots political philosopher, William Robertson, Lewis Henry Morgan, and contemporary American politicians make it quite clear that the natives are still captives of the images we have constructed for them. Why, Berkhofer asks, did whites resist a truer knowledge of the natives, their diverse and often remarkable adaptations to life on these continents? Why did they cling instead to the two easily interchangeable masks? For if the earliest views were understandably erroneous, still their doglike persistence over five centuries and in the face of a steadily rising mountain of ethnological and ethnographical evidence is peculiar. Surveying this phenomenon, Berkhofer is pessimistic about the possibilities of any real change in white thinking about the Indian and thus of any substantively new treatment of the remaining tribal groups.

Perhaps because he has conceived of his book as a survey of how the Indian's two faces were used but not why,

Frederick Turner edited The North American Indian Reader (*Viking*) *and teaches English and folklore at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The White Man's Indian does not attempt to answer these large questions. This makes it for me a curiously unsatisfying book. It is deeply informed, and those conversant with the literature of Indian/white relations will find that Professor Berkhofer has read just about everything of worth: notes at the ends of single paragraphs often refer us to seven or more book-length sources. But Berkhofer rarely raises his head from his voluminous sources to address the questions his own study has raised. This seems to me not a matter of attacking a writer for failing to write the book the reviewer has come to want, but rather of suggesting that the writer's conception of his task is not equal to that task itself.

We are told at the outset that the book will present the "implications" of the ideas and images of the Indian. But the larger implications are ignored for the smaller ones that are in fact dependent on them. Let me suggest here only the most obvious of these: where the Indian has been concerned, whites have been as much captives as Reds: they have been captives of the mental maps of European civilization with which they arrived here at the end of the 15th century.

For some time now psychologists and psychologically inclined anthropologists have been using the map as an analogy for the ways in which a culture provides its members with spatial, temporal and spiritual orientations. In the mental maps of Christian civilization the barbarians, savages and their unimaginable lands formed black borders that defined the contours of the civilized world. In themselves such peoples and lands had no meaning, existing merely as instructive counters to civilization, as Augustine, for one, had said they must. So when Europeans stumbled into the New World they were prepared to see the natives in this relationship to themselves. Roy Harvey Pearce's standard work on this subject, *Savagism and Civilization*—a work to which Berkhofer acknowledges a heavy debt—analyzes the ways in which the Indian and the wilderness served to confirm whites' sense of themselves in the midst of threatening newness. In seeing the natives as savages, Pearce shows whites could be certain, even so far from home, who they themselves were; and they could also be sure of what the savages should become.

Yet the newness, the new lands and their special conditions, kept insisting upon themselves, and here is where Berkhofer's documentation (and that of other recent books such as Richard Slotkin in *Regeneration Through Violence* and Francis Jennings in *The Invasion of America*) is valuable. For what this reveals to us in sharp detail is that while the maps of the transplanted Europeans slowly yielded to the imperatives of the Americas, certain portions of the old configurations were retained within them. And these were retained because they still seemed useful to whites. This is the sort of explanation which helps us understand why the Europeans successfully adapted to certain aspects of the New World while at the same time retaining almost intact their pre-American images of the American savages.

As yet whites have not seen sufficiently compelling reasons to redraw this part of their map, and it may be that they never will. A recent decision, for example, by the United States Supreme Court regarding the reservation boundaries of the Rosebud Sioux (*Rosebud Sioux Tribe* v. *Kneip, Governor of South Dakota, et al.*) suggests that the Justices subscribe to the old image of the savage who is fated to melt away under the sun of civilization. And a recent resolution passed by the Western Conference Council of State Governments (Santa Fe, September 1977) suggests that our political leaders still believe in the image of the profligate, nomadic savage who has no right to natural resources that might be more efficiently exploited by others.

What is the way out of this perceptual prison of our own devising? How to redraw our maps so as to see what truth lies beneath the masking images? Hard questions, since to believe in a culture's power to mediate perception is to be properly skeptical about our ability to see through such time-honored images as those of the Indian. The problem is especially acute here since, as Berkhofer shows, even the ethnological and ethnographical evidence upon which we base so much of our knowledge of tribal lives is heavily larded with racial prejudices. Our earliest accounts of the Indians are the work of accidental writers primarily concerned with their roles as sword- or Bible-carrying Christians. Reading them for truths of native life is roughly equivalent to panning for gold dust by moonlight. Even the supposedly neutral science of archaeology rests finally upon white interpretations of aboriginal evidence, and we are now becoming aware that estimates of native duration and population in the Americas may have been unscientifically juggled to meet white needs.

Abhor...one hour of idleness as you would be ashamed of one hour of drunkenness."

So wrote Puritan parson Thomas Shephard to his son at Harvard, as quoted in **THE WORK ETHIC IN INDUSTRIAL AMERICA, 1850-1920** by Daniel T. Rodgers.

In this sparkling piece of intellectual history, Rodgers traces "those threads of ideas that came together to affirm work as the core of the moral life." He explores what happened to the belief in the sanctity of honest toil when that belief collided with the facts of life in the age of industrialization and wage-slavery. He chronicles the gradual growth of the realization that slower living, vacations, play, and rest also contribute to productivity.

The pieties of preachers, the earnestness of reformers, the precepts of children's literature, the rhetoric of politicians, the impact of immigration, and the struggle for women's rights are all part of Rodgers's story. If this story is an ironic one, Rodgers notes, "it is not because the mechanical servants ran amok but because in it one can watch an ethos destroy itself."

THE WORK ETHIC IN INDUSTRIAL AMERICA, 1850-1920
by **Daniel T. Rodgers** $15.00

University of Chicago Press

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Let me venture to suggest that, flawed as so much of our evidence is, we now possess enough of it to make better use of it than we have so far. What we need now to do is *enter* it: by acts of the imagination and intuition to explore the interiors of tribal narratives, arts, and material artifacts and so move toward the aboriginally felt realities of these lands and cultures. If the European imagination helped make the masking images, perhaps now after all this time the American imagination can help to invalidate them. There have in fact been those among us who have made the necessary effort to throw away the maps and move by imagination toward a truer sense of tribal lives. Curiously, Berkhofer appears to disparage such people by suggesting that they are merely using the Indian once again, this time in the service of "counterculture" protests. Of course, the Hopi-hippies of the 1960s are easy targets here, and so are Leslie Fiedler (as good a whipping boy for academicians as may be found) and, to a lesser extent, Carlos Castaneda. But even John Collier, former Commissioner of Indian Affairs under Roosevelt, is ridiculed for his romantic misconceptions. Yet it was Collier's sense of the unplumbed realities of Pueblo life that profoundly and beneficially altered his vision of Indians and so influenced his political decisions during the New Deal.

It seems to me that such acts of imagination as these individuals have committed are truly hopeful signs rather than the shallow romanticisms and even shallower protests Berkhofer would have us see them as, and we need even more people who dare to perform them. *The White Man's Indian* provides us with more documentation of the world white America has made here. What we need are cartographers of the spirit who can help us redraw some portion of it. □

How to Spot a Red

THE GREAT FEAR: The Anti-Communist Purge Under Truman and Eisenhower. *By David Caute. Simon and Schuster. 697 pp. $14.95.*

PETER BISKIND

Alger Hiss, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, the Hollywood Ten are, or used to be, on every tongue, but what of the thousands of ordinary people whose lives were blasted by the witch hunt, who lost their jobs, health, and expectations while gaining at best a brief notoriety before falling into obscurity?

The Great Fear is their book. It is an encyclopedic examination of the purges of the 1950s that paved the way for Henry Luce's American Century. David Caute, the British historian who wrote it, begins by drawing a comfortable distinction between the American repression and others elsewhere. In "Italy and Germany, the blood flowed," writes Caute. "In Britain and America, mainly tears." There follows, nevertheless, some 700 copiously footnoted pages delineating, in numbing detail, the American Gulag, more prosaic than the Soviet version, but chilling enough in its vast scale, thoroughness, petty vindictiveness, and hypocrisy. People weren't shipped off to the wastes of Siberia; they were made outcasts in their own neighborhoods.

Caute is not a stylist. When he strains after an effect, it invariably falls flat. But *The Great Fear* is full of eloquence, an eloquence born of the slow accumulation of detail, finally becoming a Kafkaesque political *Guinness Book of Records.*

The purges began with Truman's loyalty program, and rapidly penetrated, by way of imitators on the state and local level, into every aspect of American life. These programs ultimately called into question the loyalty of an estimated 13.5 million people. Between 1947 and 1956, about 2,700 civilian employees of the federal government were dismissed, and another 12,000 resigned. The details of these proceedings are too dreary to recite, but their flavor is captured in a remark attributed to R.W. Scott McCleod, one of McCarthy's toadies who for some time headed the State Department's security program: "There can be no proof [of loyalty]," said McCleod, "since future events are not susceptible to proof."

And indeed, there rarely was any. When the Secretary of the Interior, for example, fired William V. Vitarelli, the government produced neither evidence nor witnesses. In a loyalty hearing in San Francisco, a federal employee was granted the privilege of confronting his accusers. The woman who turned him in explained her reasons: "He wore one of those great big mustaches and I have heard people say . . . those are indications that he is not a capitalist." In another hearing, a witness remarked of the accused: "My impression was that he thought the colored people should be entitled to as much as anybody else, and naturally I differed on that." In one instance, it was erroneously "discovered" that a bootblack in the Pentagon had donated $10 to the Scottsboro Boys Defense Fund before he was born. It required "seventy FBI interviews to clear him as safe to shine the shoes of Army officers." People were so frightened that they bought *The Nation* on the newsstand rather than risk getting it in the mail.

On one occasion, President Eisenhower described to a Washington dinner the code of Wild Bill Hickok on which he was raised in Abilene, Kan. "In this country," said Ike, "if someone dislikes you, or accuses you, he must come up in front. He cannot assassinate you or your character from behind." In fact, a study of 326 sample cases of dismissed employees revealed that only in 6 percent of the cases were the accused allowed to confront their accusers.

The Army was particularly zealous in rooting out "subversives." In 1955, it issued a pamphlet called "How to Spot a Communist," wherein it cited these danger signs: the inclination to discuss "civil rights, racial and religious discrimination, the immigration laws, anti-subversive legislation, curbs on unions, and peace." One soldier was brought up on charges that related to his mother-in-law who died when he was 10, ten years before he met his wife. Victor Harvis, an Air Force master sergeant with fourteen years' service, was declared a security risk in 1952 because when he was 12 years old he had accompanied his father to some Communist Party meetings.

The government pursued those whom it considered fellow travelers with a vengeance. W.E.B. Du Bois was arrested, handcuffed, fingerprinted, and tried for being an officer of an organization called the Peace Information Center that gathered signatures for the Stockholm Peace Petition in 1950. Du Bois was 83 years old at the time.

If the authorities were harsh with fellow travelers, they were worse with avowed Communists. Frank Hashmall, a leading Communist in Ohio, was given a ten-year sentence for a minor traffic violation. But in Charleston, S.C., Rudolfo Serreo announced to the police that he intended to murder Robert Now, chairman of the local Wallace-for-President Committee. He did so, and got off with three years for manslaughter.

Peter Biskind is on the staff of Seven Days.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Robert Thompson, a much-decorated veteran of World War II, and a bona fide top Communist official, had a particularly bad time of it. On the day of the 1948 Presidential election, he was knifed on the streets of New York by anti-Communist thugs. A private detective broke into his home, insulted a black baby sitter, exposed himself to one of Thompson's children, and was acquitted after two trials. The Veterans Administration cut off Thompson's disability benefits, and he was convicted in 1949 of conspiring to advocate the overthrow of the government under the Smith Act. Thompson went underground, was caught two years later, and went to prison. There he was assaulted with an iron bar. Following three operations he was released, only to die shortly thereafter.

Many whom the government could not jail or deport were deprived of welfare, unemployment, and health-care benefits. In 1955, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare ruled that party members, as agents of a foreign power, were ineligible for old-age payments. The following year, New York State terminated benefits to party officials William Z. Foster and Jacob Mindel, both 75, and Alexander Bittelman, age 65, who had paid Social Security taxes for seventeen years. A widow was cut off because her husband had worked as a handyman in a C.P. office.

Informing was a growth industry in the 1950s, and one of the services Caute performs for those curious about such things is to tell just how much money it took to induce one person to betray another. The IRS, for example, paid out $499,995 to 290 informers for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1952. One FBI informer, finally indicted for perjury, earned $11,023.45 over an eight-year period. Another, told to infiltrate the party, couldn't, but filed bogus reports of party meetings to the FBI for $250 a month.

These examples, chosen almost at random from the history of repression described in *The Great Fear,* hardly testify to the intensity and scope of the purges, which systematically gutted unions, the professions, the civil service, the universities, the publishing and entertainment industries, and effectively destroyed a generation of leftists.

"Communist" became such a dirty word that even today, to see someone openly admit to being one, as Ring Lardner Jr. recently did in *The New York Times,* gives a sudden shock. The residue of the 1950s is still so pervasive, that even *The Great Fear,* whose very purpose is to recall and expose this malign decade, itself redbaits in a halfhearted, doubtlessly unconscious way, so much has anti-communism become an unthinking reflex.

The Great Fear is full of parenthetical digs at targets of the witch hunts. Thus, Caute describes Willard Uphaus as "one of those misguided but fundamentally honorable fellow travelers of communism," to remind us that no honorable person would for one moment listen to the Reds unless he were deluded. And when Caute writes that Donald Ogden Stewart and Ella Winter "fellow-traveled to the Wroclaw Peace Congress in 1947," he sinks to the level of Stefan Kanfer's wretched book on the Hollywood Ten, *The Journal of the Plague Years.*

Describing the behavior of Communists on trial, Caute joins the chorus of ridicule that has become a hallmark of books on this period. Of the Smith Act defendants, he writes: "The leaders of the C.P. had revealed themselves during this trial to be sadly lacking in imagination, flair, humor, inspiration, and charisma," as if every party leader were required to be a Bertolt Brecht, Groucho Marx and Lenin all in one. Of the Hollywood Ten, he writes: "The Ten did themselves little credit, rolling in the mud with the Committee [HUAC], kicking and biting." The poor Hollywood Ten couldn't do anything right. One group of critics gives them bad marks for deportment, while the other group, the Eric Bentley school, ridicules them for not being more outrageous, dressing up with Jerry Rubin in a Revolutionary War uniform.

One would have thought this kind of thing had been put to rest in 1968 when Murray Kempton, recanting earlier remarks of his own, wrote: "The rhetoric of the Hollywod Ten may have been inferior to their cause, as the rhetoric of victims quite often is. It might be said for [the writers] that, in their test, they did what they could with the remaining resources of language and dignity, and that they did better than we."

Caute does a thorough job of telling us how it all happened, but he is less successful in explaining why. He casts about for different villains, waving an accusatory finger variously at politicians, the people ("the rude wind of populist intolerance"), Stalin (for the cold war), business, and so on. All of these factors played a part, but Caute opposes the theory that the witch hunt was engineered by corporate forces manipu-

NEW FROM COLUMBIA

MAGIC, SCIENCE, AND CIVILIZATION

Jacob Bronowski

"Bronowski deals with pet themes here—the nature of science, values, truth—painting them in broader, bolder strokes than in the Silliman lectures. . . . It is a heroic vision of the world the reader finds here. Bronowski absolutely exulted in the pursuit of truth as he found it in science." *Kirkus Reviews* $6.95

PSYCHOANALYSIS, CREATIVITY, AND LITERATURE

A FRENCH-AMERICAN INQUIRY

Alan Roland, Editor

These authoritative essays trace the context and substance of the psychoanalytic movements in France and America. A wide-ranging and contemporary analysis, the book offers examples from both sides of the Atlantic of current approaches to psychoanalytic literary criticism and the dynamics of creativity. $20.00

20TH CENTURY CHINA

THIRD EDITION

O. Edmund Clubb

A carefully up-dated edition of the book which the *New York Times Book Review* lauded as one that will "force its readers to think about China's place in the world and how other nations must adjust to China's dangerous and dynamic revolution."

cloth, $20.00; paper, $7.50

To order send check or money order to **Dept. JN.** Individuals must enclose payment. Institutions may request billing.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS

Address for orders:
136 South Broadway, Irvington, New York 10533

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lating the cold war for their own purposes. He seizes on the fact that in several instances large corporations like General Electric and Westinghouse had to be goaded by politicians to adopt more stringent security measures, as evidence that the politicians, not business, called the shots. But this is a superficial reading of the situation, based on a monolithic notion of corporate self-interest. For "To read the five reports on communism which the Chamber of Commerce issued since 1946," wrote I.F. Stone accurately more than two decades ago, "is to see that behind the antics of Congressional witch hunters, responsible businessmen have been working in an intelligent and organized fashion."

Caute's evident desire to tread the middle ground between the Right liberals and the Left, here defending a fellow traveler, there throwing a Stalinist to the wolves, virtually guarantees that his book will be attacked by both Right and Left. This is a pity, because for all the muddled analysis, he does a great service by diverting our attention from the celebrated cases to the countless anonymous victims of the purge, and to the machinery of the purge itself. *The Great Fear* shines a light on the real American graffiti that most of us would rather forget. □

The Darkroom Album

NEW YORK JEW. *By Alfred Kazin. Alfred A. Knopf. 320 pp. $10.95.*

EARL ROVIT

Twice in *New York Jew*, the autobiographical sequel to *A Walker in the City*, Alfred Kazin identifies what he considers his essential gift as a literary critic: "I could read the mind behind a book," he says. This is not a common talent, nor is Kazin unjustified in registering such a claim. At his best he has had an unusual empathy for the rhythms of power and frustration that shape and energize the books he has concerned himself with. But my experience with *New York Jew* suggests that Kazin may be considerably less adept at reading and/or writing the mind behind his own book. The model of the critic as the book's mind reader implies some obvious strengths, but also some equally obvious deficiencies. I am reminded of the apocryphal story of the U.N. interpreter whose unflawed fluency in four or five languages is secured at the cost of his losing his native tongue. Thus it is interesting to note that among the modern artists whom Kazin chooses to reminisce most warmly about, he makes special mention of Steiglitz, Cartier-Bresson, and Lionel Feininger whose famous portraits of New York City may be the aesthetic models that *New York Jew* is indebted to. In one place he comments on James Agee's way of describing a scene "as if he were drinking it up with his eyes," and many of Kazin's own scenes and portraits aim at a kind of passionate verbal photography.

Earl Rovit is a novelist who teaches English at the City College of New York.

His report of editorial conferences with Henry Luce, his interview with T.S. Eliot, his description of Isaac Rosenfeld's apartment, of Trilling walking along Broadway, of Edmund Wilson at Wellfleet Beach, of a Hannah Arendt "at-home," of Frost expostulating under the winter stars at Amherst have the quality of the frozen photograph—the cameo appearance carefully and severely framed for hanging in one of the more expensive and less ostentatious Madison Avenue galleries. And on this level of portraiture, Kazin is very good. His word-pictures of the young Saul Bellow exploring the streets of Brooklyn, of Delmore Schwartz erupting into the offices of *The New Republic*, of Berenson entertaining in a cold Rome hotel room with a comforter and a cheap tabloid on his lap are expertly controlled, understated, well up to the standards that Luce was setting for the illustrative material in *Time* and *Life* during the early 1940s when Kazin worked for him. Nor do I mean to imply that the critic-minded reader or verbal photographer is without sensibility or personality of his own. Still, it is worth emphasizing that a talent for passivity and self-effacement may be the prime requisite for a capacity to observe with such intensity.

But Kazin's intentions, of course, are for a good deal more than a snapshot album of the great and near-great in whose company he has mixed for the past thirty-five years. He also wants to chronicle the intellectual history of those years and, beyond that, he wants to tell his own story. His, after all, has been a legitimate Horatio Alger ascent from Brownsville to prominence in the American intellectual community —a success which has unaccountably disappointed his expectations and cast a melancholy tone over his memories. Describing himself in 1944 in the maelstrom of his difficulties in writing *A Walker in the City*, Kazin says: "I could not stop walking the streets, round and round, looking for myself. It was not just my own reasons for everything, my sense of home that I missed; it was a world in which the old invisible connections still existed." More than thirty years later, now literally perched on top of the city whose streets he has lovingly, obsessively, foot-and-pen-printed, gazing at the Western sky ablaze with real New Jersey flames that are also the symbolic fires of the Holocaust and the vengeful social ragings of the 1960s, he says: "I want to love again. I want my God back." If we take both these statements—the lamentation of 1944 and the prayer of 1978—at face value, we have some reason to believe that Kazin's reading of himself is less capacious, more deceptive, or more deeply buried than *New York Jew* appears to admit.

In effect we are invited to do our own mind-reading act and we might start with the aggressive title of the book itself. It is, I imagine, meant to be Kazin's proud assertion of his heritage among the "little Jews," the vulgar, the peasant-proletariat of the Diaspora who unpacked their steerage mentality in the tenements of the Lower East Side and Brooklyn and furnished their lives within that limiting frame. Hannah Arendt, for example, was hardly a "New York Jew" and Lionel Trilling would have been mortally insulted by the term. The title, then, must be Kazin's melodramatic gesture at laying claim to a class lineage which will ironically parallel Edmund Wilson's calm surety in his patrician Yankee ancestors.

But why must Kazin make such an insistence? Nowhere in *New York Jew* is there an indication of his having been significantly discriminated against, stereotyped, or treated with anything less than courtesy for being a Jewish New Yorker. Accordingly, it is curious to note the frequency and intensity with which he expresses his sense of wonder before someone who possesses self-assurance—precisely the quality he finds missing in his own father. Grappling with his ambivalent responses to Ezra Pound's cranky authoritarianism, he says: "My father and mother would never have understood how one man could be possessed by this much belief in himself." Of Saul Bellow, whom he met before

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the writing of *Dangling Man*: "He was proud in a laconic way, like an old Jew who feels himself closer to God than anybody else." Of Henry Luce: ". . . (he) radiated an eagerness to interpret and indoctrinate that was impossible to distinguish from nervous self-assurance." Of Edmund Wilson, who comes closer than anyone else in the memoir to being intellectual model, father-surrogate, and culture hero: "This flinty old American trust in his own opinions was his flair, his style, his enormous charm for me." And perhaps his most revealing comment on Robert Frost—a comment that may indicate in what scales Kazin finds himself weighed and wanting: ". . . he (Frost) defended every particle of existence left to him and remembered every grief with a kind of rage. The subtlety and hardness of his thinking had always struck me. . . . Those nineteenth century men who dominated the twentieth by having grown up with that ancient ferocious self-assertion!"

The motif becomes a little clearer, then, and similar examples could be added. Pride, will, self-assurance—these are seen as the real sources of power—not only in personal relationships and the variety of imperial establishments associated with Luce and Kennedy but also in the domains of art and thought as well. The heroes of Kazin's recollections—Wilson, Frost, Hofstadter, Steiglitz, Arendt—are characterized as people who have found an unshakable value and held to it despite their knowledge that the world turns on an irrational axis and that culture is an impotent guide to society. What, then, is Kazin's value? Where or from what does his pride derive? Each of his heroes have seemingly discovered some channel through which he was able to fuse his work and his capacity to love in a way that aggrandized his pride. When I try to connect the recorded arc of Kazin's life with the range of life he has admired, I stumble over obstacles and I peer into opacity. He discusses his failed marriages, the distance between him and his children, his parents' difficult deaths, and I get the unmistakable impression that for Kazin love has generally been accompanied by pain rather than pride. And I can easily infer that he has been prey to rage and bitterness. But he is careful to present no scenes of dramatic confrontation between himself and any blunt opposition. His marriages apparently deteriorate like badly sewn seams; his sense of alienation from his son is an occasion for a meditation on ancient Hebrew grammar books. He is fired from no job, he is denied nothing within the just scope of his aspirations. At the personal core of the memoir, he characteristically averts himself from his feelings, substituting instead a generalizing comment, an irony, a highly burnished picture in words.

I have seen Mr. Kazin several times in the flesh, but it occurs to me that reading *New York Jew* gives me no sense of a human body or a human voice within and behind the texture of his words. Kazin's major source of livelihood for the past thirty years has been in the profession of teaching, but this activity is barely referred to. He tells us that he stammers, that he draws a special solace from music, and it is evident that among his contemporaries, only Bellow is his equal in registering the power of New York City as a lyrical experience. The mind that is behind *New York Jew* has unquestionable intelligence, imagination and ambition, and yet—to my mind—it not only hides itself but it hides from itself.

The book will be a valuable adjunct to our understanding of the ambiance of the 1940s and 1950s and I have no

QUALITY PRINTING

Estimates on Request
From a Leaflet to a Book

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES
OUR SPECIALTY

NEW UNION PRESS, INC.
418 West 25 Street • New York, N. Y. 10001
212-741-8000

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BAMBOO

Between lettuce and pole beans,
among the choked perennials,
everywhere that was level and dark as chocolate
the shoots thrust up their red tips.
Chop it mid-stalk, each piece takes root,
each root-slice sulks in the damp earth.

All afternoon I work behind the wire.
My mother sleeps nearby in a wicker chaise,
her face obscured by foliage.
I sink the spade beside another prong,
then claw my way to where the clump is anchored,
as if I could dig that weed out of her body.

Ellen Bryant Voigt

desire to fault anything that Kazin says. I too would like to have a world "in which the old invisible connections still existed." Nor would I accuse Kazin of smeary sentimentality or glib nostalgia; the quality of his mind is too keen for those easy snares. The fact is that he has not only survived but survived with distinction, and yet his autobiography could readily be attributed to a beaten man. In the opening pages, Kazin makes a deliberate reference to Henry Adams and I must suppose that *The Education* is one of the standards that Kazin has set for his work. It is thus especially ironic to me that Adams's classic of nonexposure, that third-person experiment in private rectitude and pervasive futility, should express much more openly and positively the mind and passions behind his book than does Kazin's. □

The Exile's Return

AND I WORKED AT THE WRITER'S TRADE: Chapters of Literary History 1918-1978. *By Malcolm Cowley. The Viking Press. 288 pp. $12.50.*

CLANCY SIGAL

"No complete sonofabitch ever wrote a good sentence," Malcolm Cowley once confided to his journal. Coming as the last line of Cowley's latest collection of essays, this makes him sound suspiciously like a self-appointed Will Rogers ("Never met a man I didn't like") or Father Flanagan ("There's no such thing as a bad boy") of American letters. Fortunately for the reader, Cowley is—or, on his own admission, was—something of an S.O.B. And he can still write well, especially when academic foxes invade his literary patch.

At 79, Cowley—author of *Exile's Return* and almost our last living link to the great writers of the 1920s—is back in battle after more than a decade of self-imposed isolation. His new book is essentially a defiant counterattack on critics, notably academic "critical canoneers," who have assaulted Cowley's contemporaries from the safety of their university turrets. "The ultimate goal of the operation," Cowley warns, "is the whole age group of which Hemingway was a member." So far, Faulkner and Fitzgerald and Edmund Wilson have escaped the attacks, but "it is not hard to foresee that their turn is coming."

Cowley is the fierce champion of personal friends like Hemingway, Erskine Caldwell and Faulkner—in the early 1940s he had almost singlehandedly rescued the latter from neglect. By defending them, he is also implicitly linking their talents to the humanist, stoical, quasi-socialist values of an older, easier America he feels they represented. Cowley's own meandering, unemphatic style is as much a tribute to those values as what he is actually saying.

Although always polite and seemingly benign, Cowley is not above singling out the "meta-Freudian" textual analysts and using their weapons to parody them. Academic critics who disparage old-fashioned storytelling in favor of a Barth or a Robbe-Grillet are—Cowley says—responding to the jungle law of "parricide," the necessary killing of the tribal father by male youths itching to replace him. This bloody, mordant spectacle is nowhere more obvious than in the hammering Papa Hemingway has had to take over the past few years. The metaphor "is not of a tree being felled but of a dead lion surrounded by a pack of jackals."

Cowley takes on the jackals frontally. Critics like Vance Bourjaily, Stanley Edgar Hyman and Dwight Macdonald who dismiss the body of Hemingway's work merely to praise this or that short story remind Cowley of liquor snobs: "The process is exactly similar to the one by which drinkers some years ago used to display their superior taste by insisting on less and less vermouth in their martinis. . . ." Cowley insists it is important to deal with the whole of Hemingway, including—or especially—the so-called weakest writing. *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, far from being a slushy, overwritten failure, is "the most complex and powerful of Hemingway's works." Seen as a whole, Hemingway's real subject is—*pace* Leslie Fiedler—not so much death as "the barriers that can be erected against fear and loneliness and the void . . . decorum in the broad sense." The prose is "life-conscious and death-conscious" at the same time. Death may hover in the air like an obscene bird but, "because of this wordless presence, the author himself is doubly alive . . . He sniffs the morning air like a hunting dog. He feels and transmits to the reader a special cleanness and freshness in the physical world in a way that has not been equalled by any other novelist of our time."

There is nothing startlingly new or original in this assessment. But, as one who cut his teeth on all of Hemingway, bad and good, I say, Right On. (Why have so few critics noticed that the political insights of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* have stood the test of time as well as Orwell and Koestler's?) It's not only a literary style that is at stake here but a value system, a relationship—denied or accepted—between writing and social change.

Malcolm Cowley was the Boswell of a generation of young, college-educated writers and poets who volunteered to drive ambulances at the World War I front with copies of Laforgue jammed into their tunics. They worshipped literature and art as their main hope of escaping from crass families and Babbitt-ridden small towns. (Cowley's father was a homeopathic doctor in Belsono,

Clancy Sigal is the author of Going Away, A Weekend in Dinlock *and most recently* Zone of the Interior (*Crowell*).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Pa.) Shocked by the muddy reality of trench war and then disillusioned by the mindless, venal mood of post-Versailles America, they flirted with various forms of Dada and surrealism. But the 1929 crash sobered them up. Or perhaps, the depression reminded a few of them of their moral obligations to the poor. For some, like young Dos Passos and Edmund Wilson and Cowley himself, "the people" replaced art as the god that had to be served. These aesthetes-turned-revolutionists campaigned for Sacco and Vanzetti and went on fact-finding tours among the Kentucky coal miners. They worked with, or joined, the Communists. Most became disenchanted before, or as a result of, the fake Moscow trials in the mid-1930s.

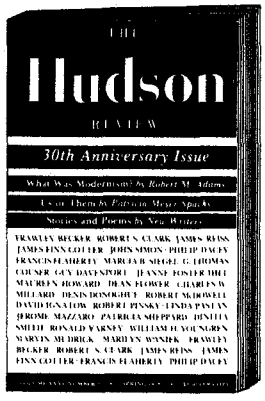
Cowley, on the other hand, became a literary bureaucrat and a persistent Communist fellow traveler—a lethal, potentially self-destructive mixture. Something seemed to congeal in him. He was no longer an impoverished young artist dreaming of his great masterpiece while begging for book reviews to keep from starving in Greenwich Village. From 1929 to 1944 he was the literary editor of *The New Republic*, dispensing favors and jobs. He resisted the efforts of friends like Wilson who sought to dissuade him from his pro-Stalinism. In the bitter factional battles that became a permanent feature of New York's literary scene, Cowley got knifed from both sides. (And, with his power as boss of *The New Republic*'s book pages, probably hatcheted others in turn.) Around 1940, during the Hitler-Stalin pact, the *Partisan Review* Trotskyists blasted his party-lining, while his Communist allies, who objected to his "rotten liberal" wavering, caricatured him in *The Daily Worker* offering a Fascist salute to J.P. Morgan. Finally, during the war he was purged from a government job as a "leftist" by HUAC's predecessor, the Dies Committee.

By this time Cowley was shell shocked. With some vague premonition of the McCarthy inquisition, he deliberately retreated into obscurity and seclusion refusing to join anything or write statements. The conformity he had fled in his young and rebellious days he now embraced. As he admits, he had also more or less withdrawn from literary life from 1963 to 1973: "I was a deaf man gardening in the country and writing books."

It is not always easy to see why Cowley reacted so excessively to the cold-war hysteria. After all, it's often part of the writer's trade—as I understand it—to be called traitor by one's friends, allies and government. How else is a writer to know he has touched the right nerve? It is almost as if Cowley's withdrawal was an expiation. But for what? The Men of Good Will had "failed disastrously in all our aims. . . . Those who fail are always guilty."

Guilty of what? After all, Cowley was not (to his credit) in the forefront of the ex-radicals baying publicly for the blood of their former comrades. And surely his "guilt" is no larger than, say, those State Department liberals and war-whooping Trots who not so long ago were eager to drop the A-bomb on Russia or who connived at the most cynical CIA-sponsored schemes to manipulate and destroy regimes which opposed American hegemony?

Yet Cowley does feel guilty. It seems to amount to a sense of self-betrayal that he spent too long away from his private muse. Somewhere inside him there is the ghost of that young writer dreaming of his Big Novel and wondering where he went wrong in not writing it. The blame he fixes on himself is domestic and terribly familiar: "I ordered and edited the sort of book reviews about which I wouldn't have to argue with my senior colleagues (at *The New Republic*) . . . I committed more than a simple error, almost a sin against myself, when I failed to resign from the paper and strike out in some



Subscribe now and receive the special book-length 30th anniversary issue

"The Hudson Review is . . . regarded as not only the best but also the last of the literary quarterlies."
—*The New York Times*

". . . the best case of a periodical which stretches across the arts is . . . *The Hudson Review.*"
—*The Times Literary Supplement*

"The Hudson Review . . . for its consistent literacy, literature, and staff critics who are neither pedants nor show-offs."
—*The Village Voice*

"Rare among magazines for being au fait with good literature on both sides of the Atlantic."
—*The Littack Supplement*

In each quarterly issue of *The Hudson Review*, you will find the best in contemporary fiction, poetry and literary criticism. You'll read the works of some of the most influential writers of our time (T. S. Eliot, Saul Bellow, Ezra Pound, Thornton Wilder, Wallace Stevens and A. R. Ammons are among past contributors) plus you will discover promising unknowns who are likely to be the greats of tomorrow. The magazine's reviews of the arts—film, music, art, theatre and dance—are among the most perceptive and candid you'll find anywhere.

Take advantage of this opportunity to receive, at no extra cost, the special 240-page 30th anniversary issue as part of your subscription. Just return the coupon below with your check.

THE HUDSON REVIEW
65 East 55th Street, New York, NY 10022

Please begin my subscription with the special book-length 30th anniversary issue:
☐ One year $10 ☐ Two years $18
☐ Three years $26
Outside U.S.A. $1 per year additional
☐ Please send me _____ copies of the 30th anniversary issue at $3.50 each.
☐ Payment enclosed $ _____

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

direction. By that time, however, I had a family, I was paying off a mortgage on our country house, and I was afraid of living without a salary." It's always dangerous to amend another person's deeply felt confession. But I cannot help wondering if the shame lies less in Cowley's having occupied an editor's chair for so long—after all he gave us some good books and resurrected several fine writers in this period—than in his embarrassed feelings about it.

Perhaps, had he not so precipitately retreated to tend his garden, his memoir would have shown more sensitivity to writers on what he insists on calling the Love Generation of the 1960s. Most of his ideas about the "love children" seem borrowed from a single source, Sara Davidson's smoothly suspect *Loose Change*, which is as if I'd tried to learn about the 1920s from reading Temple Bailey. Readers with raised consciousnesses or whose literary tastes don't coincide with the author's may become impatient with Cowley's book. Davidson is almost the only young woman writer he mentions, and he is blind to the work of women writers of his own time. Bessie Breuer gets a glancing notice but not a word, for example about Tillie Olsen or Kay Boyle. There isn't the kind of gossip that helped make his *Exile's Return* such fun. (Even now, after almost fifty years, it is a surprisingly fresh and authoritative account of the post-World War I writers at work and play.) And Cowley does play Polonius a bit heavily. ("One must reflect, however, that every age group is doomed to disaster. Some groups are defeated sooner than others. . . .")

On the whole, I was charmed by Cowley's unrevealing but morally solid musings. I especially liked his insistence that writers, like other craftspeople, "all work with their hands . . . most of them are manual types" and that it's perfectly all right for them to be intensely pecuniary: "Money is the central problem of a young writer's life, or of his staying alive." No critic who starts from these twin premises can go too far wrong. □

The Sympathetic Eye

WHAT IS AN EDITOR? Saxe Commins at Work. *By Dorothy Commins. University of Chicago Press. 232 pp. $10.*

ANGUS CAMERON

In 1939 Saxe Commins advised a young New York book editor in whom he had taken an interest that the first quality for a publisher's editor to cultivate was anonymity. Saxe Commins's anonymity—for he took his own advice in his professional life—has now been dispelled by Dorothy Commins's fine book, *What Is an Editor? Saxe Commins at Work*. In this book Mrs. Commins has herself combined the role of biographer and editor, narrating skillfully and selectively the course of her husband's career where letters, diaries and notes do not fully describe the events of the distinguished editor's career, and selecting from Mr. Commins's papers those materials that best reveal the midwife role which the book publisher's editor must play.

Mrs. Commins has herself sought to follow her husband's advice—two-thirds of the book are made from the words of Saxe and those writers with whom he worked. A wise choice, since the writers that Saxe worked with during his career were surely among the most distinguished of our century.

Saxe Commins did his undergraduate work at the University of Pennsylvania where he later studied medicine. Owing to a family financial crisis during the first year in medical school it became clear that the future editor would either have to quit college or accelerate his program. He decided to transfer to dentistry. But during his years in college, and later after he had set up a successful practice in Rochester, N.Y., Saxe spent as many weekends as possible in New York, visiting his sister, Stella Ballantine, and meeting writers, artists and actors.

During one of these weekends, sometime before 1916, Saxe met John Reed and through him, John Reed's friend Eugene O'Neill. Their relationship quickly developed into friendship and Commins spent most of his vacations with the O'Neills. Later, in 1928, O'Neill asked Saxe to come to Guéthary to work with him on *Dynamo*. Once there Saxe had occasion to read the rough draft of another of O'Neill's plays. In a letter to Paris, Saxe wrote Dorothy about this play: "It's after one in the morning. I've been reading the play, though in rough draft. It's magnificent, another enormous stride forward in his inexhaustible genius. Just you wait. Mark my prophetic words, it will be a tremendous sensation, greater than the others or I quit as a prophet."

That play was *Mourning Becomes Electra*. A year later O'Neill wrote his publisher, Horace Liveright, recommending Saxe for an editorial position. Owing to difficulties, financial and otherwise, Liveright did not hire Saxe at the time but Covici Freide did, and in 1930 his editorial career was formally launched. A year later, the opportunity came to join Liveright and Saxe Commins then formally became O'Neill's editor.

In Mrs. Commins's chapter, "The Fall of Liveright," Saxe himself recounts the end of that distinguished publishing firm in diaries he kept at the time. Saxe had brought the manuscript of *Mourning Becomes Electra* to the firm and with the demise of Liveright, Saxe, who was courted by all of New York's leading publishers for his own talents and for his association with O'Neill, went to Random House, taking the work of the famous playwright with him.

During his early years at Random House Saxe was involved with many writers other than O'Neill (Franklin Roosevelt among them), and was kept busy editing the famous Modern Library volumes that came off the Random House presses. But it was O'Neill's works that interested him most. Mrs. Commins has drawn from her husband's rich notes and diaries to tell the story of the triumph and anguish of the playwright's life with his second wife, Carlotta. As Mrs. Commins observes, "Far more tragic than any novel Gene might have written was the tragedy of his own life."

Mrs. Commins's book is no mere pastiche, for she has selected thoughtfully from her late husband's materials to reveal all of the aspects of a book editor at work. Professionals in publishing will recognize the situations and processes, but general readers will find the writer-editor relationship equally engaging. Saxe, like a few others, was an editor who was a skillful writer himself. He was co-author of a book before he went into publishing, and had made ends meet working as a professional ghostwriter. Indeed Mrs. Commins quotes in full a speech that Saxe gave in Princeton in 1958 in which the trials and tribulations of being someone else are amusingly set forth.

Angus Cameron, a book-publisher's editor since 1935, and editor in chief of Little, Brown & Co., from 1943-51, is now consulting editor of Alfred A. Knopf.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The authors with whom Commins worked had no difficulty discovering who he was. Whether by phone, personal conversation, or through letters he served as sensitive and sympathetic critic with a good feel for the construction of a book. Because an editor is a jack-of-all-trades, Saxe Commins's career covered all sorts of writers from Adlai Stevenson (he edited the Governor's speeches at the mansion in Springfield, working fifteen hours a day) to Robinson Jeffers and Stephen Spender. Saxe's correspondence with the latter reveals not only the care and patience of the editor over technical points but the impeccable taste of the poet over design and format.

Mrs. Commins devotes the last two chapters of the book to her husband's relationship with William Faulkner. Saxe worked closely with the novelist from the mid-1930s (*Absalom, Absalom*) until Saxe's death in 1958. As is often the case, the editor's role included everything from renting a dress suit and silk hat for Faulkner for the occasion of the Nobel Prize award to close work on the great man's novels and short stories. William Faulkner perhaps spoke for all of Saxe's authors when he handed the latter a little typed memo intended to be used as the dedication of *Big Woods*:

Memo to Saxe Commins
From: Author
To Editor: WE NEVER ALWAYS SAW EYE TO EYE BUT WE WERE ALWAYS LOOKING AT THE SAME THING.

TELEVISION

PETER SOURIAN

Thinkers like Lewis Mumford, Jacques Ellul and Norbert Wiener have brooded for decades upon the effects of modern technologies on human society. These effects have also been much researched by people of rather different temperament. While the thinkers have sometimes been unsatisfying because too loftily speculative, the measurers have tended to sift through mountains of pitchblende only to come up with bits of the obvious.

Where the technology of TV is concerned, what first brought the thinking down from the mountaintop and the measuring out of the laboratory, all into the bustle of the marketplace, was the publication in 1964 of *Understanding Media*, by Marshall McLuhan.

An effective classroom academic is often something of a ham, which explains some of Professor McLuhan's popularity. Also, his field is literature, a discipline that excused him from certain constraints felt by colleagues in more exact fields. McLuhan, availing himself of poetic license, conjured up catch phrases like *cool/hot medium* and *the medium is the message*, without feeling obliged to define them to the satisfaction of a social scientist.

Now that we have all come down to the marketplace we have also recently descended to the assertive diatribe. Last year's exorcist was Marie Winn, whose book *The Plug-In Drug* insisted that earnest people must stop trying to improve TV programming, because the box itself is intrinsically evil. Jerry Mander, this year's media Savonarola, is a former president of "one of the most celebrated advertising agencies in the country." His diatribe, *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television*, is an alternate Book-of-the-Month selection for May.* In place of Marie Winn's ballast of footnotes, he offers a kind of feckless bibliography that is little more useful than a long pedigree for a hunting dog that can't hunt. There is, too, the same one-note assertiveness on the basis of flimsy and often unclearly described evidence.

However, there *are* four arguments, even if played on one note. TV should be eliminated because (*a*) it estranges us from what is natural—Mander is forever parading Indians and aborigines and Eskimos to remind us of what is natural; (*b*) TV networks, in the hands of the few, exploit millions for profit—the truth of which statement has already been amply and ably documented by others; (*c*) terrible things happen to people who watch TV—Mander says that they become hyperactive or passive, numb or violent, and they are also mysteriously bombarded by "cathode-ray guns"; (*d*) according to the publisher's promotional material, Mander "proves that television has no democratic potential because the technology itself places limits on what may pass through it," and "that technical limits, never before analyzed, require the rejection of most information useful to human understanding"—here Mander offers some relatively original insight as to limitations inherent in the medium (though any medium has its limitations and such an obvious fact does not necessarily argue for its elimination).

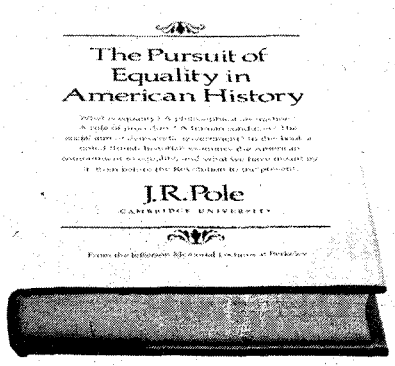
* William Morrow & Co. 371 pp., $11.95. Paper $4.95.

Now I want to do some asserting of my own, also without making the effort to substantiate. First, while Mander does retail a number of sound notions and statistics, notably concerning the economics of the thing, a lot of what he says is nonsense. My second assertion is that in this book Mander hasn't taken pains to *write* very well, although a well-written book may be the best possible argument there is against TV.

The advertising man in Mander seems not to have died in a flash of light on the road to Tarsus. I am perhaps jealous, but it strikes me that he got himself a terrific title for a nice package, just right for a book-club selection. Isn't it really an irrelevant title? Arguing for the elimination of TV is like arguing against death, and Mander must know it. The only other possibilities are that he is uncharmingly naive for one his age, or that he is irremediably nostalgic for those Eskimos who can distinguish sixty-four varieties of snowflake, those jolly keen-eyed natural Eskimos. I myself am senile with nostalgia, but since it has never made me any money I try to know what decade it is during working hours.

Books like this one lead me away

"A learned and penetrating study."
—Eugene D. Genovese



Pole seeks the meanings attached to the idea of equality by the men and women who have influenced policy and shaped the discussion from the middle of the eighteenth century to the present.

"An accessible, fruitful contribution." *—Kirkus Reviews*
From the Jefferson Memorial Lectures Series
395 pages, $14.95

At bookstores
CALIFORNIA
University of California Press
Berkeley 94720

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from my own suspicions of the nefariousness of TV per se and toward suspicion of the "nefariousness" of those who per se insist so frantically on TV's nefariousness.

Here are my four arguments against the Savonarolas. First, involving love: it may be nefarious to use poor old TV as a cheap baby sitter for so many years and then to turn ungratefully upon it if one's child turns out unhappily because of too little human caring. Second, involving economics: it may be nefarious to shout down poor old TV because so many urban latchkey children spend long lonely afternoons in front of idiotic quiz shows, if that is largely because both parents must struggle to earn a marginal living, because there is no excellent day care to be had. Third, involving conscientiousness: it may be nefarious to insist, without even halfway satisfactory evidence, that the reason why our kids can't read or write is because of poor old TV, when it may be because our culture no longer generates sufficient idealistic conscientiousness for the *rigorous* work of properly teaching the young. My fourth argument is that, in our tedious insistence that ours is a classless society, those of us who enjoy its privileges may have subconsciously felt more comfortable with the old days when there was no TV and masses of people were even more miserably ill-informed than they are now.

It is far too easy to make the argument that television is the cause of whatever ails us; whereas it is hard to confront the fact that it reflects whatever ails us. And books (like TV programming!) that seriously address that issue are hard-put to make the best-seller lists. □

FILMS

ROBERT HATCH

Early comments on *Pretty Baby* pay tribute to the beauty and intelligence of Louis Malle's new picture. As to its beauty, I gladly agree. It is a sumptuous film, composed largely of gleaming interiors and luxurious dress calculated to celebrate the animal excellence of handsome women. But as to the intelligence, I am not so sure. There is a component lacking in this picture, as in so much of Malle's work, that to a degree makes it dumb—I mean in the sense of failing to speak. It is not just that he studiously avoids moral judgments in contexts where judgment seems almost imperative. That may be disconcerting, but it can be thought that Malle sees himself as a recorder, one who leaves the moral equation to be solved by a jury of his audience. What is more disconcerting is that so often he seems to believe that experiences have no consequences, that human beings are slates forever susceptible of being wiped clean. In *Murmer of the Heart,* for example, he presented mother-son incest as a delicious interlude in the lives of two charming people who after a time broke off the affair in a mood of happy laughter and the affection of shared tender memories. It is, to say the least, an *Alice in Wonderland* view of human relationships.

And *Pretty Baby* is *Alice in Wonderland* with Charles Dodgson himself in the picture. At the time and place of the film—Storyville, New Orleans, in 1917—there was a man named Bellocq, a cripple, who devoted himself to photographing the whores of that district and is said to have made prints of great beauty. But if you did not know that bit of local history, Keith Carradine, playing the part of an elegant, shy, sexually ambiguous young man who obsessively caresses his models through the lens of a black-hooded portrait camera, would almost certainly recall the proclivities of Alice's creator. Bellocq spends much of his time in Nell's place, a most exclusive house run by a cocaine-sniffing, opium-smoking grande dame of a harridan rather extravagantly portrayed by Frances Faye. During the gaudy nights he lounges outside the action, impassively observing the genteel debauchery. In the daytime, when the light is good, he hires the whores to pose for him; in this, he is a most demanding, one might say tyrannical customer, but they put up with him because, I think, he uses their bodies with a respect to which they are unaccustomed.

Increasingly, he uses the body of Violet (Brooke Shields), a merry, willful, observant, radiantly beautiful daughter of a whore and the mischievous pet of Nell's place. Violet is 12 years old (so is Brooke Shields) and when she is not romping with the other children of the house, she is studying to enter the profession. One night she enters it. Borne on a litter by four blacks, she is carried around Nell's banquet table where the governing males of New Orleans are gathered. Then she is put on the block, quite literally a white slave, and auctioned off as the youngest, most exquisite virgin for sale in Storyville. Violet has prepared eagerly for her debut, but once upstairs she begs the man to "be gentle." That is followed by a scream and soon we see the man fleeing the place like a killer in the night. The whores rush upstairs where Violet, ever the little tease, is playing possum; she rises up and berates them for not having come more quickly to attend her.

Next day she is quite her usual self, except that she adds sex to playtime in the garden, trying to force a little black boy to couple with her. The boy's mother, one of the servants, soon puts a stop to this, telling Violet that she is a God-fearing, church-going woman and that the Bible prohibits intercourse between the races.

I mention these two episodes in particular because one is so horrible and the other so calculated to strike a modern audience as bizarre, that is, quaint. Malle's only comment on the auction scene is to switch periodically from the sweating, avid middle-aged bidders (young men who frequent Nell's did not have the money for goods of that quality) to the closed, hawkish face of the brothel's homosexual piano player (Antonio Fargas). He is barred both by race and inclination from this sort of thing, and one may assume that the tight smile on his lips expresses contempt for the gentlemen guests. He may also be feeling concern for Violet, of whom he is fond, but in that case he could have spared himself the worry.

She enters enthusiastically into the life, rubbing up against men's flies and telling them that they make her steam beneath the gown that, on her flat chest and coltish legs, looks like rainy Sunday afternoon in the attic. Her relaxation is to coquette after Bellocq, whose impassivity piques her, and when her mother (Susan Sarandon) marries one of the customers and departs for respectability in Cincinnati, she runs away from the house and moves in with him. They marry and after a wedding picnic with the girls (a group of rivermen dive from their barge and join the Renoir-like outing), Bellocq consummates the union, as far as one can tell, by photographing Violet nude, languorous on a chaise longue.

Into this idyll come Violet's mother and would-be stepfather, exemplars of prosperous respectability and determined to give the child a proper home and a good education. Violet hopes Bellocq might come along as well, but that being impossible, she kisses him a pretty goodbye and is last seen on the station platform, in sailor hat and little-girl traveling suit, being photographed through daddy's new box camera.

What is one to make of all that? It is visually beautiful, yes. Charming, also, and titillating. "Frenchmen," says Malle in a *New York Times* interview on

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

April 7, "have never had a sexual penchant for young girls. It is an English or an American or possibly an Italian inclination." That, he explains, is why he set the picture in America, where men have lusts unknown to his countrymen. So I say the film intends to titillate us. Not only Violet but all the whores oddly resemble rich and spoiled girls, displaying their vanities and jealousies in some exclusive ladies' finishing school. The picture, for all the splendor of its décor, recalls the surreptitious literature of my youth, books bearing such titles as *Secrets of a Girls' Dormitory*. Such works would, no doubt, only puzzle a Frenchman, and as pornography goes today, this is not it—nothing happens where we can see it. But in the real sense, I think it is pornographic just because nothing happens. Brooke Shields is powerfully projected as an erotic object; she has been coached at the age of 12 to behave lasciviously, we are invited to feast ourselves on her beauty, and it is feckless to pretend that we Americans are supposed to see her performance as a work of innocent art. Further, the film instructs us that child prostitution is no big deal; the kid rather enjoys stimulating half-drunken men, gets a kick out of trying to rouse a photographic voyeur, thinks preparing an opium pipe for a beldam or dragging her mother out of a customer's bed to nurse her little brother the normal chores of childhood—and then, quite untouched, puts her hair in pigtails and larks off to school to study geography and the multiplication tables. Pornography treats people as insensible objects whom we may enjoy with no responsibility for the consequences of our vicarious acts (thus there is a pornography of violence as well as of sex—in either case one may stab with impunity). Malle says, "One thing I knew I would not do was to make the child 100 percent victim. That would have been too easy, too sentimental." So he made her 100 percent object of lust for everyone except Frenchmen—it is carrying dumbness rather far.

Some years ago we were shown a *Grand Guignol* sort of vaudeville movie called *Mondo Cane* (there were, as I remember, two installments) which documented grotesque, disgusting, or pitiful practices from all over the world. One episode was made in a small town of Southern Italy, the birthplace of Rudolph Valentino, where all the young men were seen promenading about the place in guises and with attitudes that mimicked as closely as possible the image of the long-dead screen idol. They were engaged in this mad community activity because life offered them literally no opportunities and, like worshippers of the South Seas cargo cult (also filmed for *Mondo Cane*), they hoped to induce the magic of Hollywood to descend once again upon the town.

I remembered this sad charade when I saw James Bridges's *September 30, 1955*. That was the day on which James Dean was killed in a car accident, and when the news reaches a small Southern college town, Jimmy J. (Richard Thomas) is out on the field at football practice. Hearing it, Jimmy runs amok with sorrow and he is still running when the picture ends.

It is well done, this tale of hysterical infatuation with a distant, now dead, hero. Dean, thinks Jimmy on the basis of *East of Eden* (it was the only Dean film that had been released when he died), was the one person on earth who expressed what he, Jimmy, felt. To be sensitive, to be misunderstood, to be called bad when you are only trying to find love—that was Jimmy's trouble and that was what Dean was all about. This feeling of being different but not knowing what to do about it is not so unusual—the long thoughts of youth are not necessarily cheerful. But if at that age you are surrounded by second-rate people with heads full of received ideas and with lives directed toward hand-me-down goals, and if you see no way to escape from them because you are different only to the extent that you see where everyone is heading, it can drive you nuts.

Bridges sets this stage with the magic of perfect recall, and Thomas plays the part with terrifying intensity. As the picture goes on he begins to look more and more like Dean; it is no flummery of makeup, just a matter of movement and expression and the fact that Dean looked pretty much like any lanky American small-town boy with a bleak smile and trouble on his mind. A lot of young people act up; it's the ones who act out that you want to worry about. Often these small-town romantics migrate to the big cities—it is not at all unusual to run into General Custer or Dorian Gray in the streets of Greenwich Village. At the end, Jimmy J. is heading on a motorcycle for the West Coast, there to find Dean's friends and ask them *everything* he needs to know. *September 30* is a modest picture; it didn't cost much and it doesn't attempt more than to tell a simple story about a sad young man. I wonder who, these days, is the James Dean for the sad young men. □

ART

LAWRENCE ALLOWAY

Art criticism is often suspected of serving the market and in one way this is true. The trouble is not a matter of bribes or payoffs, in my experience but the fact that critics rely on the current exhibition schedule as their main, sometimes only, source of subjects. The same artists share the services of both the (commercial) galleries and the (educational) museums: they tend to appear earlier in the galleries and later in the museums. Thus, to the extent that critics accept their subjects from these sources they are following the market. Even if their reviews are hostile they confirm gallery decisions as to current issues. One reason why I try to cover in this column subjects beyond those originated by galleries is a desire to be responsible for my own topics.

However, the gallery system does provide an indispensable network of information about the current state of art and I want to record here several one-artist exhibitions that opened on April 1. In alphabetical order they are Irene Krugman (O.K. Harris Gallery, until April 22), Cynthia Mailman (Soho 20 Gallery, until April 26), Juanita McNeely (Prince Street Gallery, until April 19), Philip Pearlstein (Frumkin Gallery until April 29), and Joan Sem-

NEWS FROM THE LOW COUNTRY

Down where the stone's cold shadow
moves on the calm face of ditchwater
everyone tells the truth, a small thing
but it makes being here like nothing else—
no love quite like hunger,
no hue like gray, no music like breathing,
no kindness so tender as the soft
reception of a homeless leaf.

Leonard Nathan

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mel (Lerner Heller Gallery, until April 27). These exhibitions—two at cooperatives (Prince Street and Soho 20), three at commercial galleries; three of them downtown, two of them uptown (Frumkin and Lerner Heller)—are a reminder of just how many artists the galleries do handle.

Irene Krugman's work, like much current sculpture, occupies the ground plane. She constructs enclosures, 2 feet or 3 feet high, like rooms with the ceiling removed: we look down; the walls are mirrored and reflect schematic three-dimensional furniture placed in the center. Outside the enclosures there are simplified chairs or ladders, on a larger scale but positionally identical with the contained objects. The objects in each scale are neatly crafted, so that it is easy to compare larger and smaller forms, real and reflected forms. By doing this one enters a series of repetitions, reversals, and scale changes that make Krugman's work a beguiling compound of the evident and the illusive. She constructs models that, like Chinese boxes, imply endless variables, a puzzle of identities. Which is more real, the complete but diminished objects or the larger but uncompleted outer elements? The result is a nest of forms in complicity and competition.

In 1968, ten years ago come to think of it, Alex Katz did the painting "Impala," based on a car driver's glance sideways at a passenger seen in profile against a cool landscape, the whole framed by red upholstery and trim. This inside-outside image turned out to be an aside in Katz's work, as was a Matisse painting of a woman seen through the windshield of a car. Cynthia Mailman has concentrated on views from the passenger seat. The vista or the successive parallel planes of traditional landscape painting are integrated into automobile culture. The vanishing point perspective of the road ahead and the compressed perspective of the road behind, seen in a curved rear-view mirror, are spatially intricate though formally spare. The commanding vertical of door frame or window states the foreground plane economically; the naturalness and precision of Mailman's spatial cues set the spectator into a familiar viewing point. Her tonal sense is delicate and analytical: with it, she articulates distant planes, nearer or further, lightly but firmly. Her line is uninflected, but the qualifying tones are supple and exact. The interplay of directional movement and expanding space is a convincing expansion of the space of landscape painting.

Juanita McNeely pursues an iconography in which she expresses the autonomy of fear and pain in creatures caught in extreme situations. She paints the human body like a stranded starfish dying in the sun. The new exhibition consists essentially of two sets of abutting multiple canvases. As a rule each canvas carries a single image—of a woman, an animal, a hybrid. Her lanky figures are always in violent motion, whether falling helplessly or clawing back. Each image is convulsive and the savage interrelationships of the two sequences seem best stated by the conjunction of separate canvases. One figure in a single canvas can seem isolated, but their collision as a group in one canvas would get hectic. McNeely's multi-canvas pieces, with ordered but separate zones, seem to be exactly the form in which to develop her violence and retain formal cogency.

The athletic impact of Joan Semmel's earlier paintings of couples, shown in 1973, was modified by her adoption of a first-person point of view. Her themes were still erotic but in tranquil rather than active phases; accelerated perspective views along the body expressed the perceptions of a participant. This still occurs but with differences in her new paintings. There are parts of the body that we can't see, except in mirrors, but Semmel is not looking there. The new paintings are first-person body views organized around the tender front side of the body, and drawing on more than perspective. The view down a creased torso or the rising of knees or the turning in of a foot have a subjective impact as well as a pictorial existence. She intercepts the circles that we make between the visual perception of the body and touch and posture. She is alert to the body as the seat of sensations: body weight and muscle tension supplement what the eye sees. She has used the nude as subject matter since 1972, allowing no distraction to weaken or sidetrack her purposeful development. The introspective sense and nocturnal color of the new works are an impressive enhancement of her art.

Philip Pearlstein's nudes are viewed in close-ups, but they are without the sinuous intimacy or sharing of Semmel's work. They inhabit an objective space. The floor plane may be tilted but the space is a logical container of solids, the topography of which Pearlstein watches like a hawk. In the new paintings he reveals a kind of grace which it was his purpose to resist before. Now, without any softening, he can achieve intricate closures of large and small form, of linear detail and tonal refinement. He has always been concerned with light, but the flutter of his web of pale, complex shadows was never subtler. His increasing tenderness toward color is not concentrated on background artifacts but appears in the models themselves. His flesh painting is more sensuous than before, closer to the bloom of skin, away from the mineral gleam of marble. □

FOLKWAYS RECORDS

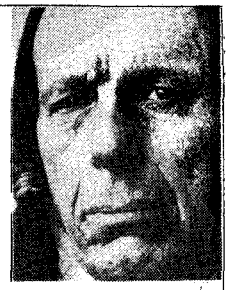
Since 1947—
1600 records available in all categories.
SPECIALISTS IN CHILDREN'S RECORDINGS.

Write for Free Catalog

We seek book dealers. ABA Booth 135.

FOLKWAYS RECORDS
43 West 61st Street
New York, N.Y. 10023

WANT TO SEE HIM SMILING?



This man is recognized by people all over the world as the symbol of efforts to clean up the environment.

His message, simple and haunting, has been taken to heart by countless numbers. Many of these individuals have also taken it upon themselves to *do* something for a cleaner, healthier life.

Keep America Beautiful Day 1978, April 22, will be for everyone. America needs everyone looking after her.

Find out what you can do. Contact your local Clean City Committee, Chamber of Commerce or Beautification Commission. Or write Keep America Beautiful, Inc., 99 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016.

Keep America Beautiful Day 1978
Saturday, April 22

A Personal OUT-OF-PRINT-BOOK-SEARCH.
Hard-to-find books. Worldwide search.
Free quotes. Write or phone:
FRANCES KLENETT, 13 Cranberry St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201 (212) UL 2-2424.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

classified

$1.50 per line / 2 line minimum/ 6 words (45 characters or spaces) per line/ Payment in advance must accompany all orders for less than three consecutive insertions. Classified Display: $20 per inch/ one inch minimum. Send to The Nation, 333 Sixth Ave., N.Y.C. 10014.

PUBLICATIONS

WORLD DEMOCRACY, THE RATIONAL ALTERNATIVE! Send $5 for Constitution for Federation of Earth and plan for provisional world parliament (60 pp.) plus sample copy "Across Frontiers," bulletin WCPA, 1480 Hoyt St., Rm. 31, Lakewood, CO 80215.

CONFUSED ABOUT PERU? For an extensive class analysis, send $3.50 for this issue or $12 for a year subscription to "Latin American Perspectives," P.O. Box 792, Riverside, CA 92502.

'TECHNOCRACY—Technological Social Design' available for one dollar from Technocracy, Inc., Continental Headquarters, Savannah, Ohio 44874.

FREE CATALOG!! Book Bargains. 400 Titles up to 83% Discount! Tremendous Assortment. Save—Buy Direct. RWB, Box 517-NA, Monmouth, IL 61462.

READ THE GUARDIAN—newsweekly gives Marxist viewpoint on national and international news. Special 6-week trial subscription, $1. Full year $17. GUARDIAN, Dept. N, 33 West 17th Street, New York City 10011.

OUT-OF-PRINT BOOKS

BOOKS FROM STOCK or will search. Friedman, Box 847, Easton, PA. 18042.

PERSONALS

SINGLE BOOKLOVERS gets cultured, single, widowed or divorced persons acquainted. Est. 1970. Nationwide. Write Box AE, Swarthmore, PA. 19081.

INCARCERATED white single male, 34, 6'6", brown hair & eyes, wishes to correspond with ANYONE 25+. Interests varied: Reading, music, painting, out-of-doors, sports, old furniture and other people's ideas & opinions. Reply to: Oscar E. Kendall, 188-856, SW-2, DCDF, 1901 D St., S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003. Answer all.

MISCELLANEOUS

NEW RECORDS & Tapes Supercheap!!! We'll special order any. Free postage & handling. Catalogue 50¢. Paul Hoosen Records, 1834 S.E. 22nd, Portland, Oregon 97214.

COLLEGE DEGREES BY MAIL. Bachelors, masters, doctorates. Legal, inexpensive, fast. Free details. Dr. John Bear, 2150 Franklin Street, Dept. 61077, Oakland, California 94612.

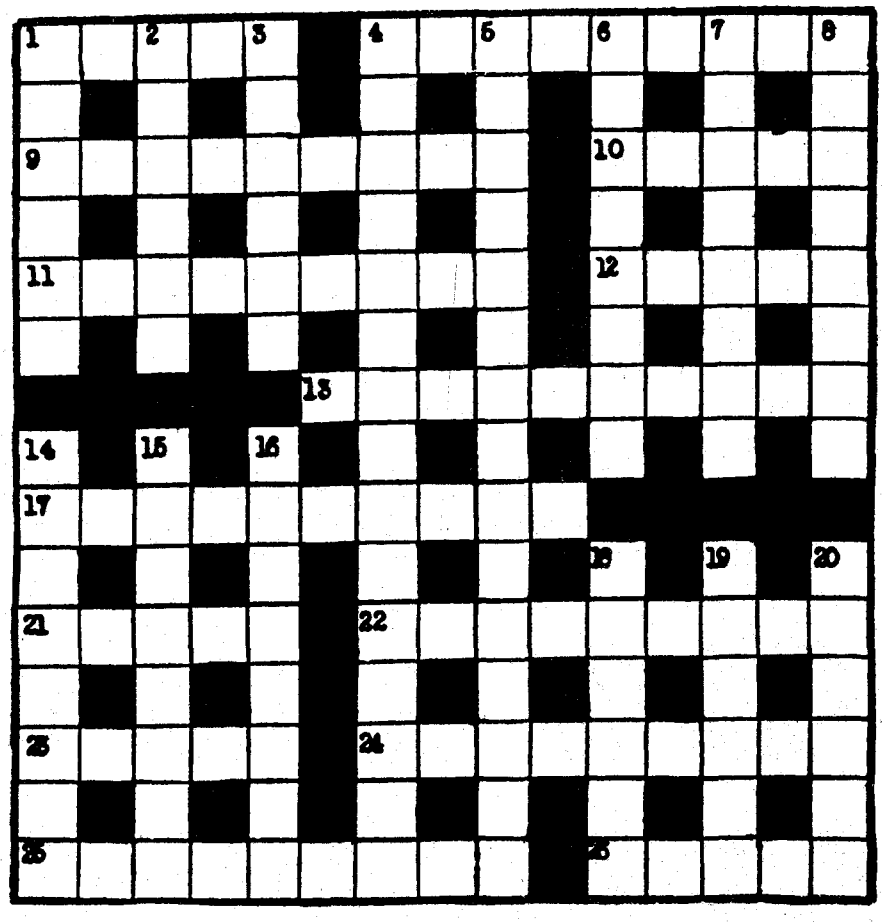
BUMPER STICKER Printing Device. Cheap, Simple, Portable. Free Details. Bumper, POB 22791 (NT), Tampa, FL 33622.

"BROWN'S THE ONE" Bumperstickers or buttons 2/$1. Matchbooks—50/$2. Dept. N, Box 762, 681 Ellis, San Francisco, California, 94109.

FOR RENT—CHARMING SHOP. Sep. bldg.—center of town. Parklike setting. Reasonable. RENA SZAREJKO, 57 Tinker St., Woodstock, N.Y. 12498. Phone 914—679-8572.

Crossword Puzzle No. 1723

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 Acts like an angel (possibly due to reverses). (5)
4 No need to ask one "Do you see what I mean?" (3-6)
9 Is one found just barely under water? (4-5)
10 Is it held by a catch? Quite the other way around. (5)
11 It could be more a film standard in the old days. (9)
12 Probably consisting of notes from a Greek letter, thus Latin (5)
13 If one can't get an apartment in London, has one had it? (4,6)
17 Sluggishness, paradoxically in motion. (10)
21 Like a rabbit with a large number of females kept together. (5)
22 A check on one's financial position has the intention of examination, according to crooked statesmen. (5,4)
23 Such a token evidently became Electra. (5)
24 A great one from Venice at a great one from Denmark, for example, implies no holds barred. (3-3-3)
25 Possibly the rider to overtake the green sort. (9)
26 Possibly 90 degrees removed from 1 across. (5)

DOWN

1 The petty officer goes around to see the city. (6)
2 One might see play in his work. (6)
3 There's a seat for the minister in the business deal. (6)
4 One with a pet aversion should be discouraged by such announcement. (4,2,4, 2,3)
5 Impling no fault in the unknown. (7,8)
6 Men Bruce organized with a form of burden. (8)
7 A close relative of Bambi, or just a Leatherstocking habit? (8)
8 Where a standard answer is present? (4,4)
14 Drink might be partly the habit of the narrator of *A Visit from St. Nicholas.* (8)
15 Perhaps in Mexico, descriptive of the type referred to in 4 down. (8)
16 Not a flight of birds—a flight of cattle. (8)
18 One has to be nominated to win them. (6)
19 Good players might be, as well as the lawn. (6)
20 Steps western travelers used to take. (6)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1722

ACROSS: 1 Running account; 8 Interconnect; 10 Epistolary; 11 Fair; 13 No good; 14 Disallow; 16 Sporadic; 17 Modena; 19 Owns; 20 Perihelion; 22 Prerecording; 23 Fishing license. DOWN: 1 Raise one's voice; 2 Nothing doing; 3 Irrational; 4 Ghouls; 5 Contrail; 6 Once; 7 Andrew Carnegie; 9 Early edition; 12 Barometric; 15 Nine iron; 18 Fiscal; 21 Arch.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

We don't mince words.

In the age of "People," gossip, TV news-as-entertainment and the proliferation of non-news features in leading news publications, **The Nation** continues to focus on the issues.

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

I enclose $_____ payment for:

☐ 1 year (47 issues) $21.00 ☐ 2 years (94 issues) $37.00

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Send to: ☐ Gift subscription 1 year $18.00

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

THE NATION

333 Sixth Avenue, New York, NY 10014

Add $1.00 per year for Canada and Mexico; add $2.00 per year for all other foreign subscriptions.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED